A case study of an African American charter school's satisfactory performance based on the perception of stakeholders of parents, teachers, students, and the community members.

Maury Lynn Wills
Clark Atlanta University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations
Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in ETD Collection for AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center. For more information, please contact cwiseman@aubt.edu.
A CASE STUDY OF AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHARTER SCHOOL’S SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE BASED ON THE PERCEPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS: PARENTS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND THE COMMUNITY.

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

MAURY WILLS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

JULY 2008
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father, Annie P. Wills and Richard S. Wills, and Grandmother, Dorothy McWilliams, who have been my role models and supported me unconditionally with relentless encouragement and blessings. You have always been my heroes. For this, I salute you all.

I am truly honored to have gone through this journey, advancing not only my goals and aspirations, but being able to offer the support and encouragement to others as I reach my final destination in completing my dissertation. As an advocate for children, I have always been steadfast in my commitment to service, high expectations, and standards. While completing my dissertation, I have realized that these words are not mine alone, but are echoed and resonated through the actions, voices, and even hopes of the stakeholders of the educational entity I serve. I am also truly honored to have been a part of an outstanding and notable higher education institution such as Clark Atlanta University. The Department of Education Faculty and Staff are of the utmost quality and have continued to guide and nourish not only my mind, but my soul as well. For that, I say that I will forever be grateful and indebted, and I salute you all.

Special thanks go to my committee members, Dr. Sheila Gregory, Dr. Darrell Groves, and Dr. Trevor Turner, my advisor. Your commitment, patience, and belief in me have provided unyielding spirit and determination so that I can share my talents with others.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.................................................................................. ii
LIST OF FIGURES...................................................................................... vii
LIST OF TABLES......................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION........................................................................................ 1
   Background of Study.............................................................................. 8
   Georgia Charter Schools................................................................. 3
   Introduction of the Charter School.................................................. 5
   Defining Charter Schools................................................................... 6
   Summary............................................................................................... 8
   Purpose................................................................................................ 9
   Research Questions............................................................................. 10
   Significance of Study......................................................................... 11
   Statement of Problem......................................................................... 12

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.................................................................... 16
   Introduction.......................................................................................... 16
   Section I: School Choice and Charter Schools............................. 16
Table of Contents (continued)

| Section II: Historical Perspective of the Charter School | 22 |
| Section III: Charter School Structure and Program | 27 |
| Section IV: Charter School Satisfaction and School Characteristics | 41 |

| III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK | 53 |
| Introduction | 53 |
| Definition of Terms | 63 |
| Limitations of the Study | 66 |
| Summary | 67 |

<p>| IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 68 |
| Introduction | 68 |
| Design of Study | 69 |
| Population | 71 |
| Instrumentation | 75 |
| Validity and Reliability | 76 |
| Data Collection Strategies and Information Sources | 77 |
| Data Analysis | 78 |
| Coding the Data | 79 |
| Scope and limitations | 80 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Analysis of Data</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student-Teacher Engagement and Teacher Creativity</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development and Participation of Civic and Values</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Awareness of Recycling, Conservation, and Protection of the Environment</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of Local Political Decision Making</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview Questions Relative to Research Questions and Goal Summary</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview Questions and Responses</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>Findings, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charter School Implications</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations for Practice, Policy, and Research</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (continued)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX**  

A. Study Consent Form Board of Directors .................................. 116  
B. Parent/Community Consent Forms ................................. 117  
C. Teacher Consent Forms ........................................ 118  
D. Student Consent Forms ....................................... 119  
E. Interview Questions ...................................... 120  
F. GCRCT Test Scores 2006/2007 .................................... 128  
G. Survey ...................................................... 135  

**REFERENCES** .......................................................... 137
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Charter School Organizational Accountability</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. School Goals, Theory Inputs, and Outputs</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. United States Charter Enrollment</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Race Ethnicity of Students in District and Charter Public Schools</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Description of Faculty and Staff Interview Respondents</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Relations of Categories, Patterns, and Themes</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

Wills, Maury
B. A. Morehouse College, 1993
M. A. Mercer University, 1998
Ed. S Clark Atlanta University, 2008

A CASE STUDY OF AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHARTER SCHOOL’S SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE BASED ON THE PERCEPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Advisor: Dr. Trevor Turner
Dissertation dated July 2008

If success is judged by parents and students voting with their feet, charter schools are in demand as these people are practically running to guarantee their children’s admission into charter schools across the nation. Although it is premature to rest on this slim evidence without other indicators of success such as student performance; parents and students are choosing charter schools for a variety of personal and situational reasons that are highlighted in this case study. The charter school in this case study is located in a southern metropolitan area. The charter school demographics consist of mainly middle class African American families who have decided to select the charter school as their child’s primary education agency.

This year long case study reflects the perceptions of parents, students, teachers, and community members with respect to how satisfied they are with the charter school.
The case study sought out to examine this level of satisfaction based on the school's goals. The research question that guided the study was: Do charter school goals provide a framework to identify and measure stakeholder satisfaction? Four specific research questions were used to develop the response to this guided research question, as well as a theme as a result of participants' responses. The case study design relied on three research strategies to determine conclusions and findings. These three strategies included interviews, observations, and analyzing documents. A qualitative design was used to describe the voices, perceptions, and experiences of the participants. The recurring themes that were found in this study included student-teacher engagement, teacher creativity development, participation of civic and values, teaching awareness of recycling, conservation, and protection of environment; and the development of local political decision making. The conclusions, findings, and implications derived from an analysis of the data, which strongly relied on themes found.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

For many decades, parents’ choice of charter schools has become increasingly popular and critical in addressing the needs of low-income and low performing African-American students, as well as dealing with lessened school accountability, lowered expectations, and a decrease of school autonomy (Education, 2004). However, little research has been completed on the subject and there is a lack of conclusive evidence that effective school characteristics/goals of a traditional public school correlate to a middle class African-American charter school, which leads to student success. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Study of Charter Schools (Nelson, 2000), charter schools nationally service a slightly larger percentage of students who are considered low income and receive free or reduced price lunch than all public schools in the 27 states that had permissible charters. This suggests that there may be adequate and viable choices for low income African-American students and also limited choices for the middle class African-American parents who are dissatisfied with the characteristics of public education. The charter school movement is serving a disproportionate amount of low income students and this has been the case since the implementation of the charter school concept (Vanourck, 2005).
Middle class African-American parents have taken an interest in charter schools as a form of parental choice and view this option more favorably in terms of solving some of the ills in the traditional public school infrastructure, according to Harris and Darcia (2000). The belief that a “choice program” is the answer and is a revolution of sorts in achieving the ideal for American Education has been echoed by many educators, politicians, community members, and even parents. School choice has become the platform of education in the leadership of American government, approximately during the last decade (Lambert & Lambert, 1989).

Even more concerned with the education reform, many middle class parents, their children, and teachers have increased advocacy for the charter movement and laid the foundation for promoting and maintaining the charter movement platform (Buckley and Schneider, 2006). In this case study, the researcher examined the satisfaction levels of an African-American middle class open enrollment charter school in Lithonia, Georgia in terms of curriculum, instruction, professional development, parental participation, and engagement. All stakeholders of the local open enrollment charter school took part in interviews where varied questionnaires have been utilized to define school effectiveness. These stakeholders played a very vital role in the success and accomplishments of the charter school under study and its reform movement.

Nearly 3,000 new schools have been launched since state legislatures began passing charter legislation in the 1990s, all with the help of parents, community leaders,
and local school districts that are encouraged to revamp the current educational system. Chartering is a radical educational innovation that is moving states beyond reforming existing schools towards creating something entirely new. Chartering is at the center of a growing movement to challenge traditional notions of what public education means. The charter movement began in Minnesota in the early 1990’s when the first charter school ignited national reform for school districts and optimism for students attending failing schools (Richardson, 1995). In the 15 years since its inception, the charter movement has been very progressive and grown significantly. According to the State of Charter Movement 2005 (Vanourek, 2005), by 2005 there were more than 3,400 charter school in the United States, over 1 million students enrolled in charter schools nationwide, 40 states with public charter school laws on the books. 42% of charter schools were also concentrated in 3 states of Arizona, California, and Florida. With these numbers increasing each year, the charter movement presents an opportunity for its stakeholders, such as educators, community members, and families to produce social, political, and economic progress in this country (Nathan, 2004).

Georgia Charter Schools

The State of Georgia made history on April 19, 1993, when the state passed its first legislation relating to public charter schools (Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, 2006). Since this time, 65 charter schools have been approved by the local Boards of Education and the State Department of Education. Georgia has well defined types of charter schools, namely: Conversion, Start-up, LEA-Startup, and State Chartered
Special schools. At the end of the 2006 school year, there were only about 48 schools in operation, which indicated a decrease of 17 charter schools since the initial charter law was passed. The number of students being serviced in Georgia public charter schools is 20,050 with an average school size of 418, which is typically smaller than the average size of 637 students to be found in a public school. At least 54% of students enrolled in charter schools are minorities and 30% are receiving free or reduced priced lunch. More than 70% of charter schools in Georgia are start-up schools with the remaining 30% fitting in the category of conversion charter schools (National Charter School Research Project, 2007). Although the number of charter schools has decreased over time, the enrollment of students attending charter schools has, on the other hand, increased. This may contribute to Georgia charter schools leading the way in making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act. For the 2005-2006 school year, at least 90% of Georgia’s charter schools made AYP, which represents a 3 point percentage increase across all charter schools in Georgia that made AYP in 2004-2005 and 11% representing improvements in the overall 2005-2006 State AYP rate of 79%. Georgia’s percentage of charter schools meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress standards has increased in each of the four years that the No Child Left Behind Act has been implemented into law (The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2006). The strategic plan that the Georgia charter schools have implemented is meeting the standards that are required on both the federal and local levels. This indicates that the
Georgia Charter Movement is instrumental in creating a viable reform for education achievement (Jacobson, 2005).

Introduction of the Charter School

The question of “where we stand” in reference to the potential of charter schools is being echoed in many educational arenas, both public and private, as American education standards are constantly being critiqued. The charter school movement critique has created competition and accountability. Ray Budd was credited with coining the new phase “Charter” and was instrumental in launching the movement as an alternative to traditional public schools (Budd, 1996). Ray Budd’s mission in setting up the charter school movement was based on the belief that a school or community could actually be held responsible to set up a charter for itself that would set a plan in place and better service its own children. But for this autonomy to work there would need to be independence from a huge bureaucracy system. In addition to Budd’s support of the charter movement, Albert Shanker, who was former head of the American Federation of Teachers, also supported the idea of reform for education. After writing a column in the New York Times supporting the charter reform movement, Shanker was invited to speak at the Minnesota Minneapolis Foundation at a local seminar (Wolk, 2005). Impressed with the innovativeness of this concept, the Minnesota state legislators introduced a chartering bill several months later. Although the bill would be voted down twice, it eventually became adopted by the state legislature in 1991, which created the first charter
school in the nation in Minnesota, Minneapolis. After Minnesota implemented its first charter law, other 40 states went along with 40 newly created charter laws to support the efforts of the reform charter movement. Dr. Budd’s belief in the charter movement resulted in a new type of school that would give teachers increased responsibility over curricula and instruction and a greater degree of accountability for student’s achievement.

Defining Charter Schools

Charter schools are options that America seems to need at this time to reform education. Educators and policy makers should embrace the innovation of charter schools, which attempts to improve the success of students who are low achievers across America’s traditional classrooms (Wisconsin Daily Journal, 2004). What is a charter school and what defines it? Do students learn more in charter schools than they would in other traditional schools? There are several types of questions that so many parents, community members, and educators are intrigued over as they attempt to unravel the many entities of the charter movement.

Although the charter school is relatively new, it is evolving in record numbers in the United States. Charter schools are granted many levels of independence from State Boards of Education and Local District Boards of Education through a system of increased accountability, which is a renewed charter or contract with the authorizing agent (Rhim, 2007). This type of school reform allows more parental control and choice, which is a realistic alternative because of the freedom and procedures that excuse the
charter school from the public schools' rules and regulations (American School Board, 2007). Advocates for school choice of charter schools, especially parents, firmly believe that a free market system creates competition in schools and raises the quality of programming and services (Lanis, 1999). These programs and services include effective school leaders, teachers, and the instructional program. According to National Charter School Research (2007), these particular programs and services are different by design and create a unique structure where student achievement and parental control is promoted and encouraged. Charter schools are founded, governed, and operated by parents, the community, business sector, and individuals who have a particular interest in changing the realm of their community. The charter school concept is considered a hybrid of public and private schools, where accountability for student performance is regulated (Finn, 2000).

There are many charter schools that serve a variety of purposes. One major purpose of the establishment of a charter school is its unique focus and goals, followed by autonomy and finally, the creation of a specialized student population (A Study of Charter Schools, 1997). Another purpose is that charter schools emphasize small, nurturing environments with close student-teacher contact. The variety of charter schools is evident, both with respect to their diversity in education programs and missions, and in their way of approaching management, governance, finance, parental involvement, and personnel policies. The charter schools that exist in the United States are Conversion Charter Schools, Start-Up Charter Schools, LEA Start-Up Charter Schools, and State
Charter School, all of which are founded to decrease existing achievement gaps and improve instructional autonomy through improved educational opportunities and choice (Donahoo, 2001).

Summary

With the stakes being continuously high for the American education system to produce literate and proficient students in its public schools, it is critical that we take a vested interest in analyzing groundbreaking strategies and innovative techniques. Charter schools can change and improve the instructional program to produce more challenging and progressive students. Every year, Georgia is faced with the goal of making adequate yearly progress with the No Child Left Behind Legislation. With the widening achievement gaps between low performing and high performing students, this goal presents financial, pedagogical, and resource challenges for traditional public schools.

Charter schools have become a more attractive alternative to traditional schools because they allow parents to choose the schools they want their children to attend without having to face the financial burden of paying for tuition. Other supporters contend that these schools help promote improvements in public education by increasing competition among schools (Lesley & Bainbridge, 2001). Charter schools were founded on the premise that innovative educators, free from the mandates of the traditional public schools, could continuously adapt to meet their students' needs. It was hoped that analyzing the charter school under study could serve as model to render a solution and promote effective school characteristics to low performing public schools. This case
study sought to describe the phenomena taking place at the prescribed African American middle class charter school. The researcher aimed to take an inventory of satisfaction levels of in the performance level with a charter school based on stakeholders’ perceptions. It was hoped that other school districts and schools will make transformations in the education process that can yield student achievement and satisfaction by receiving insight and guidance on how to:

- Implement effective characteristics and goals that promote satisfaction;
- Implement change that will result in success for all stakeholders;
- Encourage high levels of support for the charter movement;
- Embrace non-traditional school goals and characteristics that impact leadership, student success and support, and parental involvement.

The bulleted items were very critical areas in determining the goals that were effective in any attempt to produce success in all school entities, particularly those which take into account faculty and staff, parents, and students.

**Purpose**

Although several school reform initiatives have been implemented in school districts across America, this case study focused on the charter reform movement and its unique efforts to enhance the satisfaction of the education experience for African American middle class populations. The primary purpose for this study was to examine how satisfied teachers, parents, and students are with their charter school based on the
school’s goals to: (i) Enhance student enthusiasm for learning in the pursuit of better academic performance; (ii) Enhance teacher enthusiasm for learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies into the classroom; (iii) Encourage students to become more involved in their communities, now and in the future, as adults, by educating them about complex, real-world issues; (iv) Make students gain an appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another; (v) Enhance student understanding of the real-world consequences of political decisions, thereby increasing their interest and participation in the political process; and (vi) Teach students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions.

There has so far been an insufficient amount of studies that present data from teachers’, students’, and parents’ perspectives, and examine how these groups contribute to the satisfaction of a successful charter school.

Research Questions

The research question that guided the study was: Do charter school goals provide a framework to identify and measure stakeholder satisfaction? Four specific research questions were used to develop the response to this guided research question and will be used to develop a theme as a result of participants’ responses.
1. What is the satisfaction level in the performance of the charter school perceived by students who attend the charter school examined in this study?

2. What is the satisfaction level in the performance of the charter school perceived by parents who have children who attend the charter school?

3. What is the satisfaction level in the performance of the charter school perceived by teachers who are employed at the charter school?

4. What is the satisfaction level in the performance of the overall charter school perceived by stakeholders?

Significance of the Study

For more than twenty years, the measure of a school’s success has relied solely on standardized test scores and not many other factors could be identified as contributing factors to student achievement. When measuring achievement, studies typically compare norm references tests (NRT), such as the Stanford Achievement Test- Night Edition (SAT-9) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The Criterion Referenced Test (CRCT) has also been used to measure states’ assessments of learning standards (Holmes, Desmino, & Rupp, 2003).
Although these standards listed above are still common ways of assessing how well a school is doing, they really may not measure any other crucial factors in determining achievement levels including, for example, the overall success of a school. In addition, there is not adequate literature, which examines other factors of correlates to school success and achievement as it relates to stakeholder satisfaction of a middle class African American charter school.

Statement of the Problem

Many inclusive African American public schools must have a concentration on the existing inequalities in our education system that evolves around the ills of black children. It is imperative to constantly work on the goals that include strategies, reform models, and initiatives that can make the difference for children of color to succeed. In establishing a vision, mission, and goals, public schools must have the responsibility to invoke a difference and momentum of change that results in improved academic achievement for all children, including African American students. The role of any public educational agency is to understand and attempt to combat the school dilemmas that prohibit or delay students from effectively and successfully acquiring student learning (Noguera, P, 2002).

The practice of establishing a vision, mission, and goals for the charter school under study can be viewed as satisfactory so far, in terms of its quantitative data. All students attending the charter school are evaluated using a Norm Referenced Test, the
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Criterion Referenced Test (GCRCT) to create baseline data to identify both students with deficits and also those who are meeting and exceeding academic standards. The Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) expected in Reading, English, and Social Studies were achieved not only with students who participated and were required to take the test, but they were also achieved with exceptional student results. However, Annual Measurable Objectives in Science and Math were not achieved and were below the state’s minimum average.

The school performed above the state level in most academic areas in 2005-2006 including 100% of first graders who met and exceeded standards in Reading, 93% who met and exceeded standards in English, and 100% who met and exceeded standards in Math. Other GCRCT results include additional grades surpassing the state average, such as the following percentages of students who met and exceeded standards: 91% of fourth graders in Science, 90% of fifth graders in Reading, 95% of fifth graders in English/Language Arts; and 100% of fifth grade students in Math. In addition, 100% of sixth graders met and exceeded standards in Reading, while 96% percent of sixth graders met and exceeded standards in English language Arts; and 100% and 94% of seventh graders met and exceeded standards (surpassing the state average) in Reading and English respectively. Other academic areas that showed success included the fact that 80% of students met and exceeded standards in other content areas. In Reading, 86% of second graders met and exceeded the required standards, while 82% met and exceeded standards in English, and 80% met and exceeded standards in Math. Another grade that
soared above 80% was the fifth grade in the subject area of Science with 85% students who met and exceeded required standards.

For school year 2006-2007, there were also many improvements that took place and contributed to students meeting expectations in the subjects of English and Social Studies. The data revealed that there have been significant gains in students meeting and exceeding standards. For example, in Reading: 97% of first grade, 88% of second graders, 73% of third graders, and 88% of fourth graders, 90% of fifth graders, 96% of sixth graders, and finally, 79% of seventh graders met and exceeded standards (providing an overall total average of 88% of all students who met and exceeded standards in Reading at the charter school). In Math, there were minimum improvements made with students who met and exceeded standards, including 80% of first graders, 74% of second graders, 77% of third graders, 77% of fourth graders, 70% of fifth graders and finally, 88% of sixth graders. However, these math scores were lower than the average Math scores in the state of Georgia. The average Science score for the charter school was 55%, which was also significantly lower than the states' average Science score. Social Studies and English were significant highlights for the academy with an overall average of 89% and 85% respectively of all students who met and exceeded standards.

Although many of the standardized charter test scores have increased and surpassed many public scores, the public school entity has not responded to the high demands of better schools as quickly as parents and public school critics would like, so the charter movement has been the catalyst of change. The charter school movement has
been spreading across the country in the last twenty years at an alarmingly fast pace.

Proponents say that these charter schools work because they are free from the bureaucratic monopoly, which exists in the traditional system. The charter schools can develop innovative and unique curricula that can serve the students’ particular needs and adhere to the student achievement goals stipulated in the charter (Schneider, 2006).

Many of the stakeholders of the charter movement, such as parents, students, and teachers, are aware of the limited resources that may negatively affect the charter school. Because charter schools are still in their infancy stage, only a limited number of studies on charter schools focus on parental, student, and teacher satisfaction in reference to the school’s goals. Further review of charter schools is needed to evaluate this lack of support variables.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Merrian (1998) noted that, “In addition to providing a theoretical framework or foundation for the problem being investigated, the literature review can truly demonstrate the present study advances, refines, or revises what is known.” (p.123). The review of the literature in this case study will outline what is presently known about the charter school movement and process. This section is organized into 4 categories

- Section I: School Choice and Charter Schools
- Section II: Historical Perspective of Charter School
- Section III: Charter School Structure and Program
- Section IV: Charter School Satisfaction and School Characteristics

Definition

At its most basic and uncontroversial, school choice is a reform movement focused on affording parents the right to choose which school their child attends. With that said, the concept and issues surrounding choice are anything but uncontroversial. The variety of choices offered to parents creates many varied opportunities, such as private choice and public choice.
Private choice, which allows parents to use government-funded vouchers to send their children to private schools focuses on an array of concerns about parents’ and students’ rights, church-state separation, and the standards of public education. Another form of school choice, public school choice, in its varied forms, gives parents the option of transferring their children from traditionally low performing public schools to other better performing public schools which enforce higher standards.

Type of School Choice

Intradistrict choice: Allows parents to choose schools from within the district and outside of district lines.

Charter schools: Public schools that are granted a charter by local school district and LEA. Charter schools have autonomy and innovative curriculums and abide by a yearly charter.

Magnet schools: These public schools offer a particular program of study or a focus, and it is oftentimes located in an undesirable area.

Voucher plans: Funds are directed from the federal government to allow parents to choose selected schools.

Controlled choice: Families can choose selected schools but cannot interfere with the district racial, socio-economic, and gender status. (Cookson, 2004)
Rationale

As a part of school reform, school choice is becoming a viable option for parents who are dissatisfied with public education and want alternatives for their children. In the ongoing debate over school reform, parent choice is considered at the forefront (The Urban Review, 2000). An associated poll indicated that more than 60% of respondents believe that parents should have the opportunity to have the right to choose schools for their children (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1992). Public education continues to be scrutinized and debated in an attempt to seek improvements within the present structure. Research shows that failing test scores, rising drop out rates, and decreasing literacy levels are all major concerns among parents and education leaders; and Americans have lost faith in public school, compounding the fact that there has been a steady decline in confidence over the past twenty years (Loveless, 2004). For this reason, school choice is becoming increasingly popular.

We are now in the second generation of debate on school choice. During the first generation, discussion focused on the economic goal of market efficiency. Proponents of the market approach have a dismal outlook on the condition of education. They place primary blame on a monopolistic system that limits government support to public schools, where ninety percent of our students are enrolled. They advocate a radical restructuring of education so that parents would be able to send their children to non-public schools at government expense. They believe that market competition would result in a
better quality of education for all students, isolating low performing institutions as parents have the opportunity to select from a wider array of offerings (Vitieerei, 2004).

The second generation of discussion has focused on an equity model. Advocates of this approach define the problem in education more sharply, and see choice as a mechanism for improving educational opportunities for under-served communities, primarily low income racial minorities whose children attend failing schools. Rather than make government supported choice available to all, proponents of the equity model, now more popular among reformers, advocate vouchers to disadvantaged children.

Competition between schools, choice supporters also say, has led to school accountability. For this reason, school accountability will enable individual schools to experiment with different educational approaches and design models to find a way to work with their stakeholders (Raywid, 1992). As a result of experimentation of design models and innovative strategies, proponents argue that schools will step away from a one-size-fits-all education model. They also contend that offering parents the right to choose increases parental involvement in schools (Aguirre, 2000).

In addition, school choice supporters contend that it helps low performing and low income students. As Howard Fuller, chairman of the Black Alliance for Educational Options and a supporter of school vouchers, sees it: “The only people who are trapped in schools that don't work for them or their parents are the poor. We've got to create a way where the poorest parents have some of the options” (Garrett, 2001) (p. 67). Unlike more affluent families, poor families cannot choose to buy homes in communities that have
good schools, and two recent studies have found that choice programs have positive effects on low income families (Greene, 2000; Witte, 1999).

A recent study of Florida's McKay Scholarship Program claimed that charter school choice has been beneficial and proactive in educating special education students (Salisbury, 2003). Private school scholarships were provided to meet the needs of public education students with disabilities in 2000 and 2001 to more than 8,000 students. However, while promoters of this school choice opportunity praised the luxury of innovativeness and autonomy that the charter school choice provided, opponents were very skeptical of the parents who were going to be informed that they could take advantage of the autonomy provided. Some researchers were concerned that certain types of parents were more likely to exercise choice and leave their neighborhood schools, reinforcing social-class inequality (Fuller, Elmore, and Orfield, 1996). While proponents increased school accountability as a byproduct of school choice reform, opponents found the economic-based free-market theory to be problematic in the public education realm (Henig, 1997). Essentially, they do not believe that allowing schools to fail will help the system overall.

Critics of school choice argue that choice will cause the system to fail the children who are not lucky enough to remove themselves from a low-performing school and will therefore “pit student against student and family against family in the struggle for educational survival” (Cookson, 1992). Opponents also worry about the potential loss of financial support for failing schools. If students move from a failing school in one
district to a school in another district, the original district will lose valuable per-pupil funding. The loss of funding at the district level can hurt the already struggling school, one study found (Lyons, 1995). Some opponents of school choice also question whether it can be successfully implemented, especially in urban systems. “A student’s leap from one sinking school will not culminate automatically in a safe landing somewhere else,” writes Randy Ross, the chairman of the Cross-City Campaign for Urban School Reform in Los Angeles. In many large urban school districts, students who want to opt out of failing schools will have few other choices (Ross, 2002) (p.112).

Choice proponents claimed a recent victory when, in June 2002, a landmark ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court held that a state-enacted voucher program in Cleveland did not violate the U.S. Constitution’s prohibition against government establishment of religion (Zelman v. Simmons-Harris, 2002). In addition, the passage of the “No Child Left Behind” Act of 2001 officially introduced public school choice into federal law. The regulation states that parents with a child enrolled in a school identified as in need of improvement can transfer him or her to a better-performing public school or public charter school (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002). In 2003, the federal government awarded $1.3 million in grants to three pro-voucher education organizations to disseminate more information to the public about the choice provisions in the law.

Public school choice is gaining popularity at the state level. The Education Week’s Quality Counts (2004) report found that 44 states, compared to 32 states the year before, have open-enrollment programs in place, and 40 states and the District of
Columbia allow charter schools. More than 2500 charter schools are in operation in the United States. However, while the No Child Left Behind Act orders that school choice be made available to students in failing schools, as of fall 2002, few students had taken advantage of the option. Officials attribute the lack of participation to the fact that urban districts have few available spaces in higher-performing schools and rural districts often have no alternatives at all for students in low-performing schools (Robelen, 2002).

Although debate on the merits of private school choice rages on, some researchers contend that choice has become ingrained in the psyche of American public education and is here to stay. A recent report by The National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education (2003) suggests the need to shift the choice debate from whether choice is good or bad to how it can be employed effectively, through adequate funding and targeting of efforts.

Section II: Historical Perspective of the Charter School

Charter School Movement

The charter school movement begins with collective reform expressions including, alternative schools, site-based management, magnet schools, public school choice, privatization, and community-parental empowerment. The radical need for change in public education was a catalyst for the reform movement for charter schools (Weil, 2000). All stakeholders in the public sector were contributors of the charter movement. Administrators, teachers, parents and the community have played a critical role in school reform, but what was absent has been the student’s voice (Malley, Basic,
With all the aforementioned stakeholders having valuable input in the charter movement, the term “charter” may have originated in the late 1970s with a New England educator, Ray Budde. Mr. Budde first began the charter phase with suggesting that teachers in a local school be provided with a charter to be innovative, creative, and untraditional in their approach to schooling kids (Budd, 1996). Another significant contribution to the charter concept was Albert Shanker. As a former educator and leader of the American Federation of Teachers, he gained popularity with suggesting that a charter be permitted to exist in an entire school district with teacher union representatives and leaders (Shanker, 1988). Not yet approved by the vast majority of educators and parents, but by a small percentage of reformers, Philadelphia initiated charter models of schools-within-schools and called them “charters”. Many of the schools within a school were offering choice to its constituents (U.S. Charter Schools, 2007) with the two basic ideas and formations of the charter movement: autonomy and innovative pedagogy (A Study of Charter Schools, 1997). The first, autonomy, is affected by gaining waivers from many of the procedural requirements of public schools. The second is that they will use innovative pedagogy. To justify their waivers and autonomy, they are supposed to produce results superior to non-charter schools. Charter schools are rarely closed for poor academic performance. As originally conceived, the ideal model of a charter school as a legally and financially autonomous public school, without tuition, religious affiliation, or selective student admissions would operate much like a private business that is free from many state laws and district regulations, and accountable more
for student outcomes rather than for processes or inputs. Opponents of charter schools suggest that this accountability is rarely exercised, and that the more lax requirements for charter schools result in fewer qualified teachers than at their traditional public counterparts. The rules and structure of charter schools depend on state authorizing legislation, and differ from state to state. A charter school is authorized to function once it has received a charter, a statutorily defined performance contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. The length of time for which charters are granted varies, but most are granted for 3-5 years. Charter schools are meant to be held accountable to their sponsor from a Local School Board, State Education Agency, university, or other entity to produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract.

Defining Charter Schools

There are varied and unique types of charter schools. These are known as State Charter Schools, Local Education Agency (LEA) Charter Schools, Start-Up Charter Schools, and Conversion Charter Schools. A Conversion Charter School is an existing public school that has obtained charter status. After its conversion status, the school is now governed by itself, the local board of education, and the State Board of Education. The charter is governed solely by the local and state board as a third party to the contract. A Start Up Charter School has been established by private organizations, state entities, local entities or individuals. This type of charter school is operated under the charter petition, its local board of education, the State Board of Education, with the state board as
a third party to the contract. A LEA Startup Charter School is one that is created by the local educational agency in the respective state. This charter school operates under the terms of the charter and it is managed by the charter petitioner, the local board of education and the State Board of Education. A State Chartered Special School is a State Board of Education approved public school. A State Charter petition becomes approved if the local board denies the original charter that was submitted to the local board. However, a conversion charter may not apply to become a State Chartered Special school, (Plucker, Eckes, Rapp, Ravert, Hanson Makel, 2006). Many provisions have been made for the establishment of charter schools, especially with the conversion of a public school to a charter one. With the increase in public choice, many types of charter schools exist in America. (Table 1) reveals the significance of choice and most importantly, school choice for charter schools in America.

Table 1

2006 United States Charter Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year Passed</th>
<th># of Charter Schools</th>
<th># of Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>86,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>190,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>36,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year Passed</th>
<th># of Charter Schools</th>
<th># of Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>82,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>82,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>28,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>62,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2,203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year Passed</th>
<th># of Charter School</th>
<th># of Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>28,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3632</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>963724</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


III. Charter School Structure and Program

Admissions

Students are oftentimes admitted to charter schools based on application submission and enrollment phases and or guidelines (Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, 2007). If more applications are received than space is available, then the name goes into a lottery phase. A charter school must not have an admittance policy, therefore, giving all students an equal chance of being selected.

Charter schools are becoming increasingly popular due to low performance results, the No Child Left Behind program, and other concerns that parents have with
traditional public schools. For this reason, admissions to charter schools can be implemented carelessly. School admissions must be governed if it is to truly service the students and parents who are benefiting from the choice. With the onset of charter schools in the early 1990s, many felt that the charter movement would create an elitist system (Furrer, 1991). However, most of the enrollment and admissions of charter school students is comprised of minority students. Federal figures reveal that the enrollment of charter schools across the country do reflect a higher percentage of minority students than does the public school sector. (Nathan, 2006). Data in Table 2 indicate the percentages of minorities in charters compared to those of minorities in public schools. The data below shows that 44.7% of white students and 55% percent of minorities are enrolled in charter schools.

Table 2.

2006 Race/Ethnicity of Students in District and Charter Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Elementary Public</th>
<th>Elementary Charter</th>
<th>Secondary Public</th>
<th>Charter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Pacific Islander</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these times of high stakes school performance and oversight, accountability and how it is measured is a top priority for charter schools and their constituencies. Charter school revocations and non-renewals are on the rise. Charter-granting agencies are facing increasing political scrutiny regarding their oversight capacity. In addition, more and more charter school boards and staffs are recognizing the importance of evaluating their own performance as a means of improving the quality and satisfactions of their schools (Hess, 2004).

To assist charter schools and charter-granting agencies in meeting the increased demand to measure and monitor charter school performance; a highly effective accountability system has been established to provide clear guidelines, as well as criteria and evaluation tools, to measure the achievement accountability. One evaluation tool to measure a school’s is achievement levels is the federal law, No Child Left Behind. However, this same tool to measure the performance of traditional schools and create accountability has been the catalyst for the creation of more charter schools. Some suggest that implementing more innovation and creating more competitiveness among all schools would increase student achievement (Administration, 2007). The impact of charter schools and their more rigid accountability requirements could have a major impact on the U.S. education system.

The renewal revocation process for charter schools is another accountability tool to measure academic achievement and performance. According to Eckes, Plucker, and
Benton (2006), 194 schools' charter renewal was revoked as of the fall of 2002. This occurred in thirty two states across the United States. The variety of revoked renewals for a charter consists of failure to meet conditions on the contract of academic improvements, fiscal responsibility and management, or not meeting statutory requirements of the state.

As the renewal process is a high stakes one for accountability, stakeholders also hold the charter schools' accountability, which is the fulcrum upon which chartering moves the public education awareness. Charter schools are accountable to many people and entities in three areas: the market, which consists of students and parents; the internal constituencies, which consist of the school staff, education service providers, and the local governing board; external constituencies, which consist of the authorizer, state, federal, and other entities as donors, the local community and perhaps the media (Policy and Program Studies Service, 2004). In market accountability, charter schools are first accountable to their student and peer constituents. No other charter can really survive without attracting and retaining students. In many ways, data enrollment, satisfaction, and retention serve as indicators of a market based accountability (U.S.Governmental Accountability Office, 2005).

The three internal constituencies, which help to keep charter schools accountable, are the teachers and staff, education service providers, and the governing board. Charter schools must provide teachers and staff with adequate professional opportunities and compensations to be competitive with the more funded and resourceful public schools.
Often times, charter schools have teachers and administrators serving on governing boards or various school committees. These persons help to shape the voice of policy and ensure that the school is adhering to goals and objectives in the stated charter. Another important relationship of accountability is between the school and the Education Service Providers (ESP). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2004), many charter schools have viable relationships with agencies that monitor the compliance with regulations, progress towards their charter and student academic performance. Finally, the charter school staff is accountable to the school's governing board. The governing board consists of trustees who have the legal responsibility for the charter terms, and meet on a regular basis to review programs, performance, operations and finances. More than 60 percent of charter governing boards monitor staff performance, attendance, parent satisfaction, student discipline, safety, instructional practices, test scores, and other indicators.

The last of the accountability levels for charter schools consists of the external constituencies, which include the authorizers, the state and federal government, and donors. The main purpose of this group is to ensure that they serve the public's interest. There are three distinct phases that are the sole responsibility of the authorizers: the approval phase of the charter, oversight phase of the charter, and the renewal phase of the charter (Hendrie, 2005). Figure 1 illustrates the levels of the charter accountability structure that exists within the charter school structure. This figure also depicts the
organization of accountability within the cornerstone of the charter idea. Because charter schools have greater autonomy than traditional public schools, they have greater accountability to the public if they fail to accomplish their stated educational and financial objectives.

*Figure 1.* Charter School Accountability Organizational Chart

*Funding Allotment*

The charter school has limited access to local and state funding across America. Most charter schools are non-profit organizations, therefore, having to use most of their funds to secure, furnish, and maintain facilities out of their operating budgets (Berline & Fulton, 1996). Many state laws provide significantly lower than full funding to public charter schools. Others place heavy restrictions on charter school funding by making funds unpredictable, delaying payments to schools, leaving it to the discretion of districts.
to determine how much they will pay their competitor charter schools, preventing local tax revenues from flowing to charter schools, and making charter schools dependent on specific appropriations by the legislator each year. According to the Common Core of Data (2003), district charter public schools receive an average of $5,688.00 per pupil in operating dollars. The district public schools receive in contrast an average of $8,529.00 for operating expenses. This is a difference of $2,841.00 or 33 percent less for charters.

A separate study conducted by the Legislative Office of Educational Oversight in Ohio found that per-pupil operating funding for charter schools is about 9% less than that for district public schools. However, since 16% of charters' annual budget is spent on facilities and expenses, the percentages of operating dollars available for instruction are further reduced (Center for Education Reform, 2004). According to the Georgia Charter School Act of 1998, all charter schools are included in the allotment of funds that are provided to the local school system. The local school district and State Board of Education are required by legal legislation to treat charter schools no less favorably than other local schools with the provision of funding for basic services (Waldman, 2004). The charter school is expected to receive federal funds for special education programs based on the eligibility of students that it serves. All other funds are expected to come from independent sources. Due to the lack of financial resources that are provided to the public charter schools, much debate has been centered on purposeful intent to sabotage the efforts of the charter movement and more
research is needed to evaluate the detriment that the lack of funding has on long term stability of charter schools across America.

Politics of Chartering

Chartering authorities who are authorizers may legally issue such charters, which differ from state to state, as do bodies legally entitled to operate under such charters. Often it is the state board of education which authorizes charters. In other states, local school districts may be authorized to issue charters. Charter initiated bodies, the intent of which is to operate charter schools, may include locals school districts, initiations of higher education, non-profit corporations, and for profit corporations. The states of Michigan and California allow for profit corporations to operate charter schools. Some educators are concerned that for-profit charter schools are inherently flawed as they divert part of the funding that in a traditionally public school would be spent entirely on education to maintain profits. For profit charter schools rarely outperform traditional schools even when they receive higher funding.

Charter school funding is dictated by the state. In many states, charter schools are funded by transferring per-pupil state aid from the school district where the charter student resides. The Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act also authorizes funding grants for charter schools. Additionally, charter schools may receive funding from private donors or foundations.
As Minnesota forged forward with officially adopting what is the first chapter in school law in 1991, the state passed the first charter school law, with the Golden State of California following suit in 1992 (Darer, 2002). Soon after, 19 other states passed charter laws to implement change in public education. In 2003, that number increased to 40 states including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia (Dorer, 2002).

Charter schools are one of the fastest growing innovations in education policy, enjoying broad bipartisan support from governors, state legislators, and past and present Secretaries of Education. In his 1997 State of the Union Address, former President Clinton called for the creation of 3,000 charter schools by the year 2002 (Rotherstein, Farber, & Corson, 1998). In 2002, President Bush called for $2000 million to support charter schools (Patterson, 2001). In his proposed budget, he allowed for another $100 million for a new Credit Enhancement for the Charter Schools Facilities Program (Patterson 2001). Since 1994, the U.S Department of Education has approved grants to support states’ charter school efforts, starting with $6 million in fiscal year 1995 (Patterson, 2001).

Charter Schools and Special Education

As charter schools enroll an increasing number of public school students throughout the United States, they provide services to a growing number of students in various disability categories as well (Hawkins-Pammer, 2000). Parents exercising school
choice have placed their children with disabilities in charter schools throughout the
country (Hawkins-Pammer, 2000).

According to a four year report on the state of charter schools by the United States
Department of Education, charter schools at that time generally were serving a slightly
lower percentage of students with disabilities than those served by all other public
schools in the charter states (United States Department of Education, 2000). Overall,
study results indicated that charter schools enrolled three percent fewer students with
disabilities than the public schools in the states where charter schools have been
implemented. However, the study indicated that the percentage of students with
disabilities in charter versus traditional schools varied considerably from state to state and
charter schools in some states actually enrolled more students with disabilities than their
traditional counterparts (Estes, 2000).

Legally, charter schools, like their traditional public school counterparts, are
required to provide services to students with disabilities (United States Department of
Education, 2000). All school choice options, including charter schools, are subject to the
14 requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with
While research on students with disabilities in charter schools is very limited, some
advocates, researchers, and commentators have expressed concerns that students with
disabilities have not always received legally mandated services in charter schools (Estes,
2000). Among the areas discussed were accessibility, providing required services in
students' individualized education programs (IEPs), having certified professionals providing special education services, and students' being denied admission to charter schools by being counseled by charter school personnel not to attend, being encouraged to leave, or being suspended (United States Department of Education, Farber, 2000).

Farber (2000), an education reporter, described the treatment of a student with disabilities attending the Boston Renaissance Charter School, a Massachusetts charter school run by the for-profit Edison Project. According to Farber, in 2000 the United States Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights ruled that the student’s rights were violated through regular use of restraints, suspensions, and removal from class (Farber, 2000). The United States Department of Education study on disability found that administrators at approximately one fourth of the charter schools studied said they were unable to serve students with certain disabilities and actively discouraged those parents from enrolling their children in the schools (United States Department of Education, 2000). This “counseling out” to discourage students from attending the schools usually occurred informally during initial meetings between the school and parents but one school required parents to sign a “Waiver of Responsibility” acknowledging that they are not equipped, nor do they offer, special education services (United States Department of Education, 2000).

While accessibility was not an issue fully evaluated by United States Department of Education researchers, they noted the presence of ramps and restrooms that were
Researchers found that about two thirds of the schools visited at that time were marginally accessible in that there were no obvious physical barriers and at least one restroom was partially equipped for students using a wheelchair. The remaining schools were found to be inaccessible or had such limited accessibility that students in wheelchairs could not attend.

Although research has indicated some concerns about whether charter schools are meeting legislative requirements, a significant number of students with disabilities are being served in charter schools (Lange & Lehr, 2000). While parents are exercising their choice to enroll their children in charter schools, there are very limited studies to date examining why parents have chosen charter schools for their children with disabilities (Lange & Lehr, 2000). Very little is known about the motivation for choice among parents whose children have disabilities.

However, according to Lange & Lehr (2000) the reasons parents choose to place their children in charter schools have important implications at the policy level. These reasons have implications for two policy orientations inherent in the charter school and special education. Whereas charter schools seek to eliminate or reduce bureaucracy to provide students and their families with an appropriate educational environment, special education seeks to ensure a free and appropriate education for all students through legislative regulation.

While few studies have examined parental reasons for placing students with
disabilities in charter schools (Hawkins-Pammer, 2000), there are some studies that have indicated high levels of parental satisfaction with these schools. Additionally, these studies have indicated that parents of children with disabilities who placed their children in charter schools had a high level of dissatisfaction with their previous traditional public schools (Lange & Lehr, 2000).

With the lack of research on special education students in charter schools and the reasons why parents place their children in those schools, Hawkins-Pammer (2000) conducted a survey of parents of disabilities in two charter schools in each of the following states: California, Arizona, Florida, Colorado, and Michigan. Results of that study indicated most parents cited dissatisfaction with their former school as the main reason they placed their child in a charter school (Hawkins-Pammer, 2000). Their complaints mainly centered on academic features of the previous school. These same parents reportedly were generally satisfied with all features of their current charter school, except for transportation, and the five main features that influenced them to transfer to the charter school were: class size, academic programming, peer interactions, a nurturing environment, and the curricular focus of the new school (Hawkins-Pammer, 2000).

Additionally, at least 90% of the parents of students with disabilities reported being satisfied with the following aspects of a charter school: teachers, curriculum, school administrators, academic expectations of the students, home-school
communication, parent involvement, support services, and student discipline (Lange & Lehr, 2000).

However, all parent comments in the area of transportation at the charter schools were reportedly negative. Results were similar to the Hawkins-Pammer (2000) study in that 80% of parents of students with disabilities cited dissatisfaction with the previous school as the reason for the transfer (Lange & Lehr, 2000).

Researchers noted an interesting observation regarding parental perceptions of services for students with disabilities in the charter school. While parents reported that their children received a high level of special education services in charter schools, charter school directors generally reported that the charter schools were in fact offering fewer special education services than their traditional public school counterparts (Lange & Lehr, 2000). In fact, 88% of the 16 charter schools studied did not have a special education teacher available to provide services (Lange & Lehr, 2000). Additionally, directors reported a more limited continuum of services available in the charter schools, as only 44% of the schools indicated they had the ability to offer both resource room services as well as serving students with disabilities in the general education classroom with a special education teacher (Lange & Lehr, 2000).

The study authors stated that the discrepancy between parent perceptions and the reality of services available raised some interesting questions about what parents consider important (Lange & Lehr, 2000). Survey responses and comments from parents of students with disabilities who attend charter schools suggest that parents
may be interpreting 'good service' as one where their child receives individual attention,
and staff members respond to their concerns and needs.

Section IV: Charter School Satisfaction and School Characteristics

Student Satisfaction

Comparing their current school to their previous experience in a traditional
school, students rank the charter school as superior in several areas. A higher
percentage of students found charter schools superior in providing smaller classes, caring
teachers, good teachers, teachers who provide personal attention, and a principal who
cared about his or her students (Barrett, 2002). Charter school students also tended to
rank the charter schools at about the same level as traditional schools in areas such as
feeling safe, feeling a sense of belonging, and the level of order in the classroom. There
were some differences between charter schools serving predominantly at-risk students
and other charter schools. However, students in schools serving predominantly
at-risk students tended to give higher marks to charters, rather than traditional schools, in
areas such as providing interesting classes, offering a choice of classes, and being located
close to home (Barrett, 2002).

Students in charter schools, responding to a paper and pencil survey, indicated
that they tended to be satisfied with their experience in charter schools, with about 55 %
students, 53% also indicated they were satisfied with their charter school experience while 31% were very satisfied (Barrett, 2002).

Students also were asked if they would return to the charter school the following school year. About 44% of those students who were not graduating said they would return, about 34% were undecided, and about 22% indicated they would change schools (Barrett, 2002). However, students in schools mainly serving at-risk students indicated they were less likely to return to the charter schools. About 36% of those students indicated they would switch schools, 32% said they would return to the charter, and approximately 32% were undecided. Study authors cautioned, however, that several charter schools in this category serve adjudicated students and for them not returning to the school is an achievement (Barrett, 2002). Despite the fact that, overall, charter schools seem to receive strong support from their students, research results indicate that student satisfaction with charter schools has declined over the five years of the study (Barrett, 2002).

Researchers also examined the reasons why students chose charter schools and their plans upon leaving school. Approximately 31% of students in charter schools indicated that they made the choice to enroll in a charter school on their own, while about 28% indicated attending the charter school was their family’s idea, and about 28% said student and family made a joint decision. The main reasons that students indicated that
they chose the school was because the classes fit their needs better and they got more attention from teachers (Barrett, 2002). Following graduation from the charter school, about 43% of the students intended to attend a four-year college, about 12% intended to get a job, and about 11% planned to enroll in a community college (Barrett, 2002).

**Parental Satisfaction**

What really is significant to the success of a charter school are the parents’ knowledge of and contribution to the charter school, as well as the advantages and attributes of the school. In a recent study, Weiher (2002) conducted interviews via telephone of parents of students in charter schools and also of a comparison group of parents who had children in traditional public schools in areas that also had charter schools. Parents of students in charter schools indicated that they were most likely to learn of their child’s charter school from friends or relatives. Parents in the comparison group who were aware of charter schools also were most likely to learn of the school in this manner. However, each year, the majority of charter school parents in the comparison group indicated that they had never heard of charter schools (Weiher et al., 2002). Researchers observed that the fact that a majority of respondents indicated on a yearly basis that they had not heard of charter schools may be significant. It seems the public is not aware of open-enrollment charter schools even after the schools have been in operation for five years (Weiher et al., 2002, p. 64).

Parents also indicated the school attributes that were the most important in enrolling their child in either a charter or traditional public school. Over the five years of
the study, parents indicated that high test scores, teaching moral values, and better discipline were the three main reasons they enrolled their children in charter schools.

Comparison group parents were much more concerned about school safety, giving it the highest ranking in year five of the study followed by high test scores and teaching moral values. In contrast, parents of charter school students never ranked school safety higher than fourth in their list of school attributes (Weiher et al., 2002). Charter school parents tended to give high marks to the charter schools. In year five of the study, about 62% of charter school parents gave their charter school a grade of A, about 28% gave the school a B, about 6% gave the school a C, about 2% gave the charter school a D, and about 2% gave it an F. This is in contrast to the ranking they gave their previous schools, which they graded much lower overall. About 23% of charter school parents gave the previous school an A, about 35% gave that school a B, about 22% gave the school a C, about 11% gave it a D, and about 9% gave it an F (Weiher, 2002). Comparison group parents overall were not as pleased with the schools their children were attending. Only about 28% of those parents gave their school an A, 43% gave their school a B, about 19% gave their schools a C, about 6% gave the schools a D, and about 4% gave their schools a grade of F. Additionally, when parents were asked to indicate whether they were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with various characteristics of their schools, charter school parents indicated a much higher degree of satisfaction with every characteristic in the study than did their comparison group counterparts (Weiher, 2002).
Parents in charter schools not only were more pleased with their school choice than the comparison group, they also tended to participate in their children's schools to a somewhat higher degree than parents in comparison traditional public school settings (Weiher, 2002). For example, in year five of the study, about 60% of parents in charter schools said they helped with fund-raising as compared with about 47% of comparison group parents, about 59% of charter school parents volunteered at school as contrasted with about 42% of comparison group parents, about 41% of charter school parents attended school board meetings as compared with 32% of comparison group parents, and about 24% of charter school parents helped make program decisions as compared with about 17% of comparison group parents (Weiher, 2002). Both groups were fairly close in percentages of participation in the areas of attending parent teacher conferences with charter school parents at 80% and comparison parents at 79.7%, and attending parent teacher organization meetings with charter school parents at 69.4% and comparison parents at 68.4%.

Finally, parents were asked where their children would have attended school if they were not enrolled in the charter school. The largest percentage of 66% indicated their children would have been enrolled in neighborhood schools, another 12% reported their children would have attended private religious schools, and about 8% said they would have attended magnet public schools. Additionally, about 6% of the parents indicated they would have home schooled their children, about 5% indicated they would have sent their children to a private non-religious school, and about 3% of the children
would have dropped out of school (Weiher, 2002).

**Student Result of Georgia Charter Schools**

Charter school researchers also examined the performance of charter school students in addition to looking at overall school performance (Shapley 2002). They noted that charter school enrollment dramatically increased in the period from the 1997-1998 school year until 2000-2001. In the 1997 school year, there were 1,606 students in charter schools in Georgia and by the 2000 school year, that number had increased to 37,636. Also, more than twice as many students were served in charter schools serving fewer at-risk students (25,728) in school year 2000 than schools serving predominantly at-risk students (Shapley, 2002).

An examination of percentages of students in charter schools serving mainly at-risk students revealed a trend toward higher percentages of students in charter schools serving predominantly at-risk students in schools that have been in operation for one year, which is about 32%, versus those in operation four or more years at 24 (Shapley, 2002). However, even in schools in operation for only one year, about 70% of the students were served in charter schools which do not serve mainly at-risk students. Despite a trend toward more students attending charter schools serving mainly at-risk students, the overwhelming majority of charter school students could be found in schools serving students who are not mainly at-risk (Shapley, 2002).

An analysis of student population by grade levels and retention rates revealed that the percentage of charter school students enrolled in grades k-8 was similar to the
Georgia statewide figures, with between 6% to 8% of students until about the ninth grade when charter schools served a higher percentage of students in each grade throughout high school (Shapley, 2002). Researchers noted, however, that charter schools served a larger proportion of students in high school grades. Retention rates by grade in Georgia charter schools were within 1% of those statewide except in grade one, where charter schools retained 1.6% compared to 5.8% statewide, and grade nine, where charter schools retained only 6.1% compared to 14.2% statewide (Shapley, 2002). Using the student as the unit of analysis, researchers determined that there was not a large difference in student success on the 2000 and 2001 administration of GCRCT in the subject areas of reading and mathematics between charter schools serving at-risk students and those with more advantaged students (Shapley, 2002). However, students in charter schools serving predominantly at-risk students scored about 5% higher in the area of mathematics than students in charter schools serving fewer at-risk students. Additionally, researchers noted that pass rates for both types of charter schools approached state averages. Researchers cautioned, however, that data analysis of student performance was based on an examination of student performance over time and involved longitudinal student data covering 1999 to 2001, so the number of students in some of the comparison groups was small (Shapley, 2002). When student scores were compared by grade level in 2001, pass rates increased as non-charter school students moved into advanced grades except for grades 6 and 10 in reading and grade 10 in mathematics (Shapely, 2002).
Their traditional public school counterparts pass rates tended to be lower in grades 3 and 6 in reading when compared to other grades, although pass rates tended to be at least 10% lower per grade than traditional public school scores in reading. In the area of mathematics, the tenth grade student pass rate for charter schools was 55.3% versus 89.3% for students in traditional public schools, a difference of over 20 percentage points. The third grade student mathematics passing rate of 50% for charter schools was over 30% less than the 83.1% pass rate statewide. Mathematics passing rates tended to be at least 15 points behind statewide scores per grade (Shapley et al., 2002).

Further, when student GCRCT passing rates were examined over years of charter school operation, researchers noted that larger gains in GCRCT passing rates from 2001 to 2004 tended to be associated with the length of time the charter school had been in operation (Shapley et al., 2004). For example, students who had been in charter schools serving mainly at-risk students that had been in operation four or more years showed about a 26% gain in scores in reading and about a 29% gain in math. The percentage of gain was less for students in charter schools serving a lower percentage of students at-risk (Shapley, 2004).

Researchers also compared 2000 and 2001 percentages of passing GCRCT scores for students attending charter schools that were either start-up schools or charter schools that converted from existing schools. The highest student passing rates were found to be in conversion charter schools serving predominantly at-risk students with pass rates of about 98% in both reading and math in 2001, a score which was higher than state
averages. By contrast, in charter schools serving fewer at-risk students, scores were higher in start-up rather than conversion schools and the lowest pass rates were found in start-up charter schools serving at-risk students (Shapley, 2002).

Finally, 2001 reading scores were analyzed for the four conversion charter schools serving mainly at-risk students. One charter middle school had by far the largest number of 298 students tested and a pass rate of 99%. The lowest scores were in a charter high school, which had 18 students tested and a pass rate of 15.4%. Researchers cautioned that in terms of interpreting results where the student is the unit of analysis outcomes for student-level data analyses may be heavily influenced by individual schools, and that findings may not generalize to charter schools as a whole (Shapley, 2002).

Effective School Characteristics

What constitutes a school as being effective is dependent upon the characteristics of the school correlated to its goals (Lezote, 1991). The research for effective characteristics is credited to Ronald Edmonds. Mr. Edmonds implemented a unique study with several schools in California where he analyzed what was effective and what was not. Lawrence Lezote, another notable researcher, conducted a similar study that shows a correlation of effective schools and effective qualities and/ or characteristics, originally created by the late Ronald Edmond and Lezotte (1991). Edmond’s (1986) study was initiated by a response to a federal paper, which was written by James Coleman (News Week, 1990), a prominent education researcher, to discuss the
satisfactions of American education. Effective schools research emerged in response to this controversial paper concluding that public schools did not make a significant difference. Coleman's Report (Equality of Educational Opportunity Report, Jansen, 1995) credited the student's family background as the main reason for student success in school. His findings proposed that children from poor families and homes, lacking the prime conditions or values to support education, could not learn, regardless of what the school did. Edmonds, and other researchers, looked at achievement data from schools in several major cities where student populations were comprised of those from poverty backgrounds. Nationwide, they found schools where poor children were learning (Edmonds, Brookover & Lezotte, 1996). Their findings contradicted Coleman's conclusion. Edmonds, Brookover, and Lezotte (1996) did not have any reasonable answer as to why certain schools made a difference and others did not. However, to address the issues in their study, successful schools were compared with similar schools, in like neighborhoods where children were not learning, or learning at a low level. Characteristics describing both types of schools were observed and documented. The basic conclusion of this comparative research was:

- Public schools can and do make a difference, even those comprised of students from poverty backgrounds.
- Children from poverty backgrounds can learn at high levels as a result of public schools.
There are unique characteristics and processes common to schools where all children are learning, regardless of family background. Because these characteristics, found in schools where all students learn, are correlated with student success, they are called correlates. This body of correlated information is now referred to as Effective Schools Research (1999).

Replication research conducted in recent years reaffirms these findings and the fact that these correlates describe schools where children are learning and not schools where children are learning at a much lower level. This replication research has been conducted in all types of schools: suburban, rural, urban; high schools, middle schools, elementary schools; high socio-economic communities, middle class communities, and low socio-economic communities (Effective School Research, 1999).

The correlates of effective schools mentioned above can be identified with unusually high achieving schools based on Lezote’s (1995) study. From his findings, Lezote also derived 6 characteristics related to the correlates:

1. An orderly environment/Safe Environment
2. Involvement of parents/Parental Involvement
3. Respect for diversity in cultures and environments
4. High cohesion and collaboration
5. Principals providing abundant support for their teachers' professional development

6. Engaged active learning and academic success/time on task

There are many positive characteristics or correlates that are associated with a quality school which enhances a community of learners and promotes achievement. Many families seek out charter schools because they seek to attain many of the qualities of effective schools for their own children. They have become more proactive in seeking out alternative schools, such as charter schools, for these reasons.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

According to Merriam (1998), a research study is best undertaken when there are present some ideas of what you want to do and what you want to know as the researcher. The theoretical framework in this study consists of the researcher’s questions based on the satisfactory performance of a charter school as it relates to curriculum and instruction, professional development, parental participation, and engagement. These inquires will guide the case study that is going to be undertaken. The collective set of questions that will be posed by the researcher will be derived from the theoretical framework of the study. For the purpose of this study, the theoretical framework will synthesize the works of Heing, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux, 1999; Colman et al, 1966; Equality of Educational Opportunity Report, Jansen, 1995; Jansen, 1995; Richard Murane, 1981; and Reezigt, 2000, and arrive at the following conclusions: The theoretical framework will provide an analysis of curriculum and instruction, engagement and shared governance, parental participation, and professional development to provide a structure for academic achievement as measured by stakeholders’ perceptions.

There are many highlights and emphasis directed towards the effective characteristics of a school: parent involvement, curriculum and instruction, professional
development, engagement of teachers and students, and shared governance that could have significant impacts on student achievement, questioning the public overcrowding of schools, lack of success or achievement of its students, and limited options of students being exposed to a varied and challenging curriculum, school characteristics must be theorized, researched and initiated if the school house is to progress as a viable hub for the community (Interview with Swift, 2006). The interest in improving the equity, efficiency, and performance of schools and the educational system has been a continuous and prioritized goal of the United States school system, which was initiated in the spirit of reform efforts as a result of the report of *A Nation at Risk* (1983). The performance of schools and its outcome is inclusive of a school’s satisfaction with respect to its focus, mission, vision, and goals.

According to Hill, Foster, and Gendler (1990), a focused school with a consistent monitoring of goals improves the strong commitment to parenting and the molding of student attitudes and values. Although the conventional reform efforts to improve schools have focused on three structural elements of school organizations such as core technology, organization, and governance, what has been consistently absent from the study of reform movements has been the comprehensive study of a school’s mission statements and goals in order to create effective schools (Borman, Hews, Overman, & Brown, 2003). The mission statement and goals play a significant role in school satisfaction that defines student achievement of organizational tasks, aims, and objectives.
The mission of the charter school understudy encompasses goals of a technology and environmental focus. Its mission is thus to educate a student population about the essential need to consider environmental ramifications of technology and other business decisions, via a hands-on, community-oriented instructional curriculum (L.A.T.E. Charter Petition, 2004). The school sets out to improve student achievement via a curriculum which: recognizes the important link between technology and the environment; promotes higher order thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision making skills; motivates students by offering a real world context for learning; engages learners in investigative, hands-on/minds-on, student-centered, and cooperative activities between industry and environmental groups; advances educational reform goals; correlates to state and national academic standards; considers the environment in its totality with the co-existence of business and the environment; and promotes continuous lifelong learning.

In addition to its mission, the goals of the charter school also provide a conceptual framework for an effective school. The school initiated by this specialized charter believes that by utilizing a curriculum, which allows and encourages in-depth, hands-on study in the very community in which its students will live, it will serve the following 6 goals:

(i) Enhance student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically

(ii) Enhance teacher enthusiasm about learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies into the classroom
(iii) Encourage students to become more involved in their communities, now and as adults, by educating them about complex, real-world issues.

(iv) Make students gain an appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another.

(v) Enhance student understanding of the real-world consequences of political decisions, thereby increasing their interest and participation in the political process.

(vi) Teach students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions.

According to Goal Theory (Maehr, 2001), goals operate in framing action, thought, and feelings. This is considered the dominant perspective on achievement, especially in the study of achievement in any educational setting. With goals designating a complex set of processes and specific competence of outcomes, the demonstration of competence is the objective.

Furthermore, based on previous theories, James Colman's (Colman et al., 1966) research studies suggested that school satisfactions' characteristics relied on large sample regression and analysis of school inputs and outcomes. For example, the James Coleman Study (Equality of Educational Opportunity Report, Jansen, 1995) measured the resourced characteristics of schools that were available and not how these resources were organized and used. Richard Murane (1981) reviewed that the resources of a school or “school matters” contribute to school achievement, and these are the primary resources of teachers and students, as well as the secondary resources, which are the physical...
facilities, class size, curricular and instructional strategies that all affect student learning through their influences and the behavior of teachers and students.

The framework of Figure 2 provides a clear understanding of "school matters", the input relationship of parents, teachers, and parents and its affect on the variables to be analyzed: curriculum and instruction, parent participation, professional development, shared governance, and engagement. This input process will determine the satisfaction of outcomes of political participation, achievement, motivation and enthusiasm, and environmental appreciation at the charter school as perceived by stakeholders.

Stakeholders | Inputs/Goals/Mission | Outputs
---|---|---
Students | Curriculum and Instruction | Political Participation in school
Teachers | Parental Participation | Achievement
Parents | Engagement | Motivation and Enthusiasm
| Shared Governance | Environment Appreciation

Figure 2. Outputs of School Satisfactions as measured by parent, student, and teacher inputs.
The charter school's secondary resources of the curriculum and instruction, professional development, shared governance and engagement of both students and parents are vital to the success of its students. For this reason, the technology and environmental reform efforts of the school have been dependent upon the instructional design which includes textbooks, teaching methodology and goals established for the school. In addition to the specific objectives set forth within the curriculum itself, the charter school reform provides the following explanation of its curriculum: The central premise underlying this school is that environmental issues inherently intrigue children in a manner which is more interesting to them than traditional curriculum coursework. Additionally, if these environmental issues can be identified in the very community in which these children live, they become not only more meaningful, but also more likely to make a lasting impression upon the child who watches that environment as he/she learns. Thus, a heavy emphasis has been placed upon teachers and students getting out of a traditional classroom and studying a variety of environments as they actually exist, from trees and puddles in the playground to the soapstone and monadnock granite formations throughout the county where the school is located. By tying the evolution of an industry/technology to the environment in which it evolved, a whole range of interrelated subjects are opened to the curious mind of a student. The simple fact of the matter is that this portion of the county where the charter school is located possesses a very unique geology. That geology has influenced the development of that community from aboriginal trading villages to the quarries, which epitomize it today. The development, which followed the geology, has had positive and negative impacts and effects upon the
environment, history, economy, and even demographics. If those impacts and effects are not properly assessed, understood and managed, then the existence of the very geology, which created this county of today, might well be jeopardized. This locale truly presents an opportunity to understand a circle of life continuum in a very understandable and available medium for the charter school’s stakeholders.

According to Lipton, Oaks, Quartz, & Ryan (2000), shared governance is directly related to teacher performance and affective pedagogical practices when it comes to increasing schools’ satisfactions and performance in and outside of the classroom. Strong, shared leadership and governance enable schools to achieve their missions and create high-performing schools. Research is clear on the important link between leadership and student achievement, particularly as leadership shapes teaching and learning. When members of a school community are empowered to make decisions, a school culture becomes more collaborative (Hallinger, C. and Davis, K 1990). From staff to administrators, parents to community members, and with students always at the center, the “we” is automatic.

In a shared governance approach, decisions are made by those closest to the students in schools due to autonomy and levels of trust. In shared governing schools, staff share leadership responsibilities and autonomy with principals, such as staffing, budget, curriculum and assessment, governance, and schedule, which allows each community to structure itself according to students’ needs. Shared governance also encompasses staffing autonomy, which in turn ensures that the school staff is committed to the Leadership and Governance Budget and schedule
decisions are decided at the school level, with staff input and decision making and 
governing board approval. With increased school-level decision-making power, there is 
increased responsibility for each decision that is made.

Shared governance gives schools the power to shape their resources of leadership, 
professional collaboration, and the autonomy by which they can use this power to support 
the learning and achievement of all of their students. Professional learning and 
development is a prerequisite to stability and progress in educational reform. For this 
reason, in the reform charter school, professional development is the exception, not the 
norm. Effective techniques and methods from professional development are used to the 
fullest extent possible in classrooms. Lesson plans are required, but depending on topic 
may cover several weeks at a time. Preparation of lesson plans are monitored/verified by 
the Principal and submitted to the Local Board upon request. As the children age, staff 
become facilitators, encouraging learning from other classmates, reference resources 
(including computer, a media center and a library), volunteers in the classroom, and from 
active participation, measurement, record-keeping and drawing conclusions regarding 
project-oriented tasks. Staff is required to undertake rigorous training. Teacher 
workshops occur at least monthly. Teachers are expected to explore and develop new 
environmental technological lesson plans consistent with the curriculum. From a 
financial standpoint, teachers with different relevant environmental experiences were 
hired, so as to allow for inter-classroom sharing of someone with specialized training; as 
well as interactive training. All teachers are required to engage in pre-service training by 
use of programs provided by the National Project for Excellence
in Environmental Education or a similar project about the history and philosophy of this curriculum. They were also taught how to find resources relevant to the curriculum, including books and Internet-based resources, and to adopt approaches to teaching this curriculum. A minimum of 16 hours of such training is required of all teachers prior to assuming their positions. On an on-going basis, the goal is for teachers to have in-service training of at least 20 hours per school year. A minimum of 10 hours of such training relates to teaching an environmental technological curriculum. Additionally, the reform entails availability for faculty use of publications entitled "Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence," "The Environmental Education Collection, A Review of Resources for Educators," and the "Biodiversity Collection" produced by the World Wildlife Fund. Training records shall establish compliance with this goal. Documentation of training is also forwarded to the Local Board quarterly. Teachers who do not satisfy these requirements, absent just cause, are not be rehired. Teacher retention rates also demonstrate the faculty's understanding of and commitment to the curriculum.

Parental involvement and school partnership is a “potent combination” for school success and satisfaction. As Alonzo Crim, former superintendent of Atlanta Schools, promoted active PTA support for schools and ongoing parental involvement, there was evidence of parental reform that was welcomed and celebrated to promote student achievement (Heing, Hula, Orr, Pedescleaux, 1999). This type of parental involvement is also evident with the charter school reform that has been established, which consists of their involvement in the petition, school governance, finances, organizational structure, and student activities. Parents, members of the community and other interested parties
are involved extensively in the school. Upon the onset of implementation, due to some concerns about other public schools, a group of parents of children in that school have investigated other options. They discovered that the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance had, for years, contemplated the establishment of a Lithonia charter school which would be able to take advantage of the unique educational opportunities presented by Arabia Mountain. In conjunction with the Alliance these parents began exploring the possible development of such a reform model school. The Alliance was quite supportive, and provided the interested parents with considerable information and resource banks relative to this type of school and reform.

Parents, members of the community and other interested parties are involved in the school as follows: Parents play an active role in this school, from service on its board to participation as volunteers in and out of the classroom, membership in a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and service on various committees as established by its Board. Parents also play a day-to-day role in actively supervising the progress of their children, by participating in a required 20 hours a month which would include helping their children with at-home projects, attending school performances and events, and transporting them to and from school. Parents also assist in the process by which the school’s performance is assessed on an annual basis via a survey poll. Community involvement is very extensive. Community representatives sit on the Board, one from the Arabia Alliance and one from a South DeKalb business.

As a result of the implementation of the school reform charter, its specialization of the curricula’s focus, the satisfactions of the school will be achieved and student
success is guaranteed to be measured by the success of students' ability to master higher-order thinking skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, motivation to learn with a continuum of knowledge, recognition of conflict and need to reconcile competing societal interests. In addition, there are high gains in parental and community participation which contribute towards the success of the charter school. Moreover, the theoretical framework for this study will encompass the resourced characteristics of the charter school, specifically that of curriculum, parental and student involvement, and professional development and engagement.

The theoretical analysis of the effective characteristics of schools is incorporated with different points of view: integration of school satisfactions and the search for additional insights in other theoretical traditions, such as organizational theories, curriculum theories, behavioral theories, organizational learning, and human resources management (Reezigt, 2000). These theories make clear which characteristics or factors are important for satisfactions at different levels of the system of students, learning, teaching, and context.

Definition of Terms

Intended Outputs: Goals that require action that satisfy needs (Maeh, 2001)

School Stakeholders: Individuals who have constructed interest, beliefs, and assumptions in the school (Hermann, 2006).

- Parents: Individuals who have children who are enrolled at the public charter school and who are accepting of the schools mission, values, and standards.
• Students: Children who have applied for admissions and meet the requirements of residing in the county in which the charter school is located.

• Teachers: Individuals who are licensed and have committed themselves to the mission, vision, and philosophy of the school.

Perceptions:
Meaning, values, and assumptions based on individual experiences and feelings.

Charter School: Public school that is granted a charter petition to establish alternative education practices, mission, and vision that also offers school choice within public school systems. They operate under many of the laws and regulations of but vary from traditional public schools (Finn, 2000)

Satisfactions and Actual Performance: Deals with targeted performance and the degree at which performance is achieved (Scheerens & Demus, 2005)

Georgia Criterion Referenced Test (GCRCT): A criterion of referenced tests that assess mastery of content in Georgia’s curriculum in the areas of math, reading, science, and social studies. It is administered by local public school systems and schools in Georgia to measure student performances of state standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2007).

Parental Participation: Parental involvement inclusive of visiting school, organizational membership, donation of resources and money, assisting with instructional activities that can all be documented and equivalent to 20 hours per month (D. A. T. E. Charter, 2007)
Engagement: Students’ and teachers’ authentic participation in teaching and learning activities that promotes high levels of interaction and Socratic discussion that is purposeful and has real meaning and relative value (Schlechty, 2002).

Professional Development: Ongoing learning opportunities available to teachers and other education personnel meeting the specific needs of the organization in terms of environmental and technology exposure and training of The National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education, as well as history and philosophy of this curriculum. 16 hours of such training is required of all teachers prior to assuming their positions. On an on-going basis, 20 hours per school year, 10 hours of such training relates to teaching an environmental technological curriculum, and faculty use of publications entitled "Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence," “The Environmental Education Collection, A Review of Resources for Educators,” and the “Biodiversity Collection” produced by the World Wildlife Fund (D. A. T. E., 2007).

Curriculum and Instruction: A guide and road map utilizing the Georgia Performance Standards with emphasis on integration of technology and the environment and the delivery models of Blooms Taxonomy, Howard Gardner’s Levels of Intelligences, and Levels of Engagement.

Political Participation: Students’ involvement in local civic matters and decisions in their classroom, community and school.

Achievement: The success of students in grades 1-7 measured by standardized 2007 test scores on the Georgia Criteria Referenced Test (GCRCT) and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).
Motivation and Enthusiasm: Students’ exhibited behaviors that are intrinsic. Students who are happy and excited about learning and coming to Dekalb Academy and feel that the environment at the school is nurturing and supportive.

Environmental Appreciation: Students’ awareness of environmental issues that effect the environment. Students’ consideration and strategies in protecting and conserving the environment.

Shared Governance: Stakeholders who have the opportunity to be involved in making decisions entailing the school’s structure, operations, programs, instruction and curriculum.

Limitations of the Study

This case study is limited to the study of beliefs and perceptions of effectiveness of one charter school in Lithonia, Georgia. Although this case study aims at providing insight into the satisfaction of a charter school, it is limited to a single middle class African American charter school and a small sample population of grades 1-3. This study is also limited to the full understanding of interpreting feelings, insights, and experiences of the parents, students, and teachers at the school being studied. Furthermore, limitations will also be observed in this study with some subjects being required to be interviewed and surveyed, leading the researcher to assume that the reported information is truthful and binding. Therefore, a further limitation of this study to be obtained will be dealing with the aspect of honesty, integrity, and accuracy of the respondents included, especially with the headmaster of the school as the researcher. Protection relative to this
mentioned limitation will be taken in this study to defend the integrity of the findings. These protective measures such as, triangulation, member checks, and peer examination are outlined in Chapter Four (Merriam, 1998).

Summary

This case study viewed the satisfaction of the charter school as the standard for student achievement and success. The researcher conducted a research of the satisfactions of the charter school through the use of examination. Examinations of documents, and participants’ experiences and perceptions were used to grasp a full perceptive of the implementation and critique of satisfactions. The theoretical framework was used to make predications to provide explanations that relate to the essential perceptions of effective school goals that took place in this research process. According to Schemes and Demesue (2005), theory function can explain and predict which factors will assist the practitioner to better understand the underpinning and contributing variables in the mechanisms of empirical work.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), research methodology for a case study can consist of an explanation of a phenomenon (pg. 65). This explanation discovers or confirms the research process used to determine if the treatment used in this case study will have the intended effects anticipated. This case study focused on the perceptions of satisfaction that produce desired outcomes of achievement in a charter school. The unique focus of the charter school is a reform method to improve the instructional components of teaching and learning, relevance of learning, and participatory involvement of learning by stakeholders as it may differ from other schools’ focus; this case study depicts such differences. Methods were used to collect qualitative data. The qualitative data in this case study was used to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, and reinterpret the quantitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This chapter will be inclusive of the following parts to validate the methodology that will be implemented in this research case study:

- Design of Study
- Data Collection
- Measurement Instrument
- Data Analysis Procedures
Design of Study

The array of questions addressed in this study required multiple approaches for collecting and verifying information and for capturing the various perceptions that exist. The aim was to collect enough information based on the following school goals and objectives in order to analyze the following school as being satisfactory to stakeholders: enhancing teacher enthusiasm about learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies into the classroom, encouraging students to become more involved in their communities, making students gain an appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another, enhancing student understanding of the real-world consequences of political decisions, and teaching students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications that will be based on the perceptions of stakeholders of parents, students, and teachers. The data collected will provide feedback and valuable information to the charter school to assist them in making improvements, as well as addressing the goals regarding the charter school reform movement as a whole. Since the purpose is to evaluate perceptions of satisfaction in achieving school goals, this case study focused on outcome specifics within a single charter school and did not make judgments about random charter schools.

Case studies help us to understand the many processes that evolve during events, programs, and projects (Mirriam, 2003). Case studies also assist us to reveal the context characteristics of these programs, projects, and events, which also assist the reader to understand the procedures used to derive conclusions.
The design of this study consisted of a case study, examining perceptions of achievement based on accomplishment of school goals by stakeholders. The researcher of this study aimed to explore the charter school environment, with the aim to identify the specific influences that are effective for the satisfaction in the performance of charter schools: parental participation, curriculum and instruction, engagement, and shared governance.

Melroy (2002) notes that qualitative research requires the researcher to investigate actions and reactions from human beings. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) noted that quantitative data can have conventional uses, which can set trends in a setting and provide statistical data to validate ideas that will develop during the research. In addition, investigating will require the case study to examine satisfaction level in the accomplishment of school goals. In this case study, there were several methods used to collect data, which provided for triangulation. These methods were:

- individual interviews
- observations
- school demographic documents.

Interviews were transcribed and scripted. From this, themes were identified. In conjunction with an analysis of relative documents, findings were made and conclusions were reached. Fully understanding the charter school implications required the consideration of the individual’s own perceptions and subjective apprehensions.
Perceptions of the known activity were valuable to the field of education because it is important that stakeholders know if the components and elements of curriculum and instruction, parental participation, professional development, engagement, and shared governance are effective, as well as whether or not these components of the school have improved the overall school and student achievement.

Population

The population of this study consisted of students in grades 1-7 who are enrolled in the charter school, parents who have students who are enrolled in the specified grades of the charter school, and teachers and classified staff members who have relationships with the specified grades and are employed at the charter school. The total number of participants interviewed was 5 students, 5 parents, 5 faculty and staff members, and 2 community members. All participants were randomly selected to participate in the case study. Tables 3 outline the demographics of the participants.

Table 3

Description of Faculty and Staff Interview Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Faculty and Staff (N = 4)</th>
<th>Administrators (N = 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

**Description of Faculty and Staff Interview Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Faculty and Staff (N = 4)</th>
<th>Administrators (N = 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades Taught by Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

**Description of Faculty and Staff Interview Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Faculty and Staff (N = 4)</th>
<th>Administrators (N = 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades Taught by Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description of Student Interview Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Students (N = 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

Description of Parent Interview Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Parents (N = 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years with School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of Parent Community Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Community (N = 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years with School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bogdan and Bicklen, (2003) suggest that a descriptive case study is one that collects data by internal sampling, talking to everyone in the groups and examining the population in that it is inclusive of the setting. After completing the surveys, focus groups and interviews in this case study, the stakeholders will be aware of some of the significant contributing goals of a charter school that lead that school towards satisfaction in performance and academic achievement. The researcher was able to capture relevant information discovered from examining the intended goals of a charter school and understanding how these intended goals lead to performance satisfaction and reform in this context.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study consisted of collective questions that correlate to the charter school goals. These questions were all designed with key words that emphasized the important elements of these charter school’s goals: enhancing student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically, enhancing teacher enthusiasm about learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies into the classroom, encouraging students to become more involved in their communities, making students gain an appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another, enhancing student understanding of the real-world consequences of political decisions, and teaching students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions. The questions were designed for each respondent group of parents, teachers, and students.
Validity and Reliability

To establish validity and reliability with respect to the instruments used in this study, a field test was conducted based on the original questions using teachers, parents, and students in the charter schools with 1-7 grade levels represented. The pilot test questions were designed for 1-7 grade students. The results were analyzed and revised based on the data. Furthermore, to obtain internal reliability and validity, protection measures of several strategies to be employed, such as: examination of subjects and investigator's position where subjects involved in the study were asked to elaborate and comment on findings as well as investigators comments to provide clarity and understanding (Merriam, 1998); long term observations were conducted at the research site which consisted of a one year study of repeated observations of the same phenomenon of classroom instruction, engagement, parental participation, and interaction among stakeholders (Merriam, 1998); member checks were also significant in collecting data and interpretations that were tentative from participants in the study to check validity and finally taking tentative interpretations and data back to participants to validate the results as being plausible (Merriam, 1998), and finally triangulation was employed using multiple sources of data and methods to confirm findings. The researcher made the purpose of this case study clear to all participants. The participation was voluntary and the information gathered as a result of the conclusion of the case study was done on an anonymous basis. Participants involved in the case study were given the opportunity to
reflect on and review the results before triangulation was implemented. The information was then shared with all participants to elicit further feedback.

Data Collection Strategies and Information Sources

This section contains brief descriptions of the data collection methods employed. The researcher method used in this study was a case study that involved qualitative research of the following: observations and detailed descriptions of behaviors and activities that were all recorded. The primary data collecting process involved interviews. The researcher taped and recorded interviews that were transcribed and coded to identify patterns and themes.

Further details on these methods are included in the sections that contain the respective results. A letter was provided to the Governing Board of the charter school to seek permission to conduct the study on school grounds and retrace addresses of parents with students attending the school. Teachers in grades 1 though 7 were informed of the study and provided with consent forms during informal meetings. Parents of students in grades 1 though 7 were informed about the study in newsletters and PTO meetings, and were given consent letters during PTO meetings, arrival, dismissal, and other parent meetings. Students were randomly selected in grades 1-7 and also given consent forms. The questions were posed in interviews to selected students and teachers at the charter school during classes, teacher conference periods, after school hours, and following parent-teacher-student planned events.
On the first visit, in early March, the researcher distributed consent forms for the interviews and arranged a secured date for administering the interviews to parents, teachers, and community members. Two weeks after the first campus visit in March, the researcher collected permission forms from a designated employee on the campus. The participations names were not included on any transcriptions. All participants were informed that the interviews were to be completed in approximately 5 to 10 minutes and that their responses would remain anonymous. During the last week in late March, interviews took place in pre-designated areas of the school.

Interviews

Interviews were held for students, teachers, and parents. All interviews were inclusive of questions derived from the charter school goals. Teachers from grades 1-7 were randomly selected from those who are involved in instruction, as well as as administrators, who were asked to be a part of the interviews. Parents who have children in grades 1-7 at the charter school and local community members were also able to participate in the interviews and were selected by PTO President and randomly by headmaster. These interviews were held at separate times.

Data Analysis

Data was obtained from the interviews and analyzed. Interview observations and data were juxtaposed. Themes and findings were developed and taken into consideration when developing relative themes that supported overall findings. Upon completion of the interview, sessions were taped, transcribed, and reviewed to facilitate records responses.
Coding the Data

The first step in the analysis of the data was to create a coding system for the interviews applying codes to each individual response. Coding categories were a crucial step in the data analysis process. This is a means of sorting descriptive data that was collected to reflect on regularities and patterns (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Results of documents, observations, and interviews were developed and categorized by themes. The themes provided the opportunity for the researcher to draw conclusions (Table 4).

Table 4

_Relations of Categories/Patterns/ Themes_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Tools</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>Beta Club</td>
<td>1. Teacher Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boy Scouts</td>
<td>2. Development of Civics and Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tech Club</td>
<td>3. Awareness of Recycling, Conservation, Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hands on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Differentiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fun Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Differentiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Development of Political</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued)

Relations of Categories 'Patterns/Themes'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Tools</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>Hands on Activities</td>
<td>Participation and Decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Boards</td>
<td>Learning Centers</td>
<td>Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers</td>
<td>Parental</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental</td>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>Student Clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
<td>Standards and Goals</td>
<td>Analysis of Student Work and Assessments</td>
<td>School Surveys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scope and Limitations

The study had the following limitations:

- Very limited research on perceptions as variable of satisfaction of charter school
- The participants in study may not have disclosed full honesty
- The study was limited to perceptions of stakeholders
• The researcher who conducted the study was the CEO/Headmaster of the charter school.

• Student achievement was defined as overall stakeholder satisfaction and results according to the 2007 Georgia Criterion Test Results.

• The population involved in the study consisted of a small sample size.

Summary

The qualitative research design, as a case study, was naturalistic, descriptive, meaningful, and inductive (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). The researcher had the opportunity to become simultaneously the researcher and practitioner at the natural setting of the charter school under study. Being concerned with the context, the researcher understood the action when it was observed in the setting in which it occurred. The data collected also provided the researcher with descriptive data of words and pictures to illustrate and substantiate the presentation being observed. Being concerned with the process allowed the role of the researcher to be effective in analyzing how the strategies suggest how the expectations were translated into procedures, activities, and interactions. In addition, the inductive process of the case study made it feasible to have a theory developed, which allowed for the theory to be grounded in the data. The abstractions were built, gathered and grouped together. Finally, the case study allowed for the researcher to capture the participant perspectives in their meaning and assumptions of satisfaction. This allowed for the researcher to have dialogue and interplay among the participating subjects.
This chapter defined the researcher methodology used in the study as well as the tools, relative data, and strategies to ensure that there was validity of findings during the research process.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

Multiple strategies of research sources provide a very succinct and comprehensive perspective. Merrian (1998) recommends that the researcher employ at least three effective research strategies. The three relevant effective research strategies used in this study were document analysis, interviewing, and observations. These research strategies will ensure that the different data sources are validated and findings are cross-checked (p. 244).

This chapter presents an analysis of data collected for a one year period and describes the findings with the aim of identifying the specific influences that are effective for the satisfaction of charter schools: parental participation, curriculum and instruction, engagement, and shared governance.

The purpose of this study is to examine how satisfied teachers, parents, and students are with their charter school based on the school’s goals which are to: (i) Enhance student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically, (ii) Enhance teacher enthusiasm about learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies into the classroom, (iii) Encourage students to become more involved in their communities, now and as adults, by educating them about complex, real-world issues, (iv) Make students gain an appreciation for how their community and
participation in the political process, and (vi) Teach students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions. The interview questions are derived from the research questions and attempt to derive a conclusion with satisfaction levels:

1. What is the satisfaction with the charter school as perceived by students who attend the charter school examined in this study?

2. What is the satisfaction with the charter school as perceived by parents who have children attending the charter school?

3. What is the satisfaction with the charter school as perceived by teachers who are employed at the charter school?

4. What is the satisfaction with the charter school as perceived by community members where the charter school is located?

5. How is the satisfaction with the overall charter school as perceived by stakeholders?

The timeframe of this study took place over a year. The charter school has seen dramatic growth since its inception over two years ago. Student enrollment has increased, parental involvement has improved, and teacher and student relationships have strengthened. Moreover, the commitment to the implementation of the charter school's goals has continued to be a highlight for this particular charter school in this charter movement. The establishment of the charter school has proven to be very successful, with test scores continually rising and surpassing the local district and state marks in some
categories. Parental involvement has soared with 94% of parents volunteering, contributing in many ways to their child's education. Many initiatives, such as recycling and conservation, continue to engage students and promote involvement within the school and the community. Finally, the uniqueness of the charter school is also centered on the level of autonomy and quality of creativity that is fostered with the teaching and learning process.

The successful charter school reform movement continues to be a unique alternative for stakeholders and this research study provides parents, teachers, students, and the public with the perceptions of the overall implementation process. Twenty individuals participated in the interviews which included 5 parents, 5 teachers, 1 administrator, 5 students, and 2 community members. The interviews took place during the spring of 2008 and were conducted at the local charter school site. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Each interview lasted for about five to eight minutes.

Upon completion of the interviews, in order to draw together the information needed to conclude this study, the researcher closely examined the interview transcripts and formed themes. The other documents used the study included the existing school surveys, criterion referenced tests, classroom observations, and informal surveys.

Themes

As the study continued to develop and interviews were concluded, themes were formed. The compilation of the information found was used to answer the research questions of this study. The themes emerged in relationship to the implementation of the
charter schools and specifically, the school goals. These themes as used to organize the date are as follows:

1. **Student - Teacher Engagement and Teacher Creativity**: Student and teacher involvement refers to the effective strategies to involve children and teachers in the teaching and learning process. The actions of teachers to actively engage students in meaningful activities and work are purposeful. As a part of the school’s goals, the teaching and learning process is to be relevant to students’ context of the real world. Teacher creativity refers to the autonomy and uniqueness of the teacher implementation of instruction, delivery of instruction, and focus on student learning styles, execution of higher level student questioning, implementation of learning games and learning centers, and differentiation of instruction.

2. **Development and Participation of Civic Participation and Values**: School clubs refer to the various organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Technology Club, Environmental Club, Beta Club, Student Government Association, and Band. These clubs and organizations provide students with the opportunity to participate in civic and community activities that promote citizenship and moral values. In addition, the clubs and organizations developed a direct response to the implementation of the charter school’s mission and goals.

3. **Teaching Awareness of Recycling, Conservation, and Protection of the Environment**: Recycling refers to the collective efforts of the school body of
parents, students, and teachers participating in the school’s recycling program. The recycling program also extends to the home and community. The recycling initiative includes a focus on all paper, plastic, glass, and metal products. This has been a strong component of the charter school’s focus. Environment refers to the school’s independent curriculum of life, earth, and natural science that has been integrated into the Georgia Performance Standards Curriculum. The school has extended the school day by 45 minutes to implement the environmental curriculum, which also reinforces the school’s focus and goals.

4. Development of Local Political Decision Making: Shared governance refers to the variety of parent, teacher, and student participation in operations, fundraising, support in the classrooms, financial resources, materials and supplies, and talents. According to the school’s charter, parental involvement is a 20 hr. monthly requirement for all families who have children enrolled in the charter school. In addition, teachers are involved in the leadership team, charter renewal, and building issues. Students are also a significant part of decision making with the Student Government Association and Class Representatives participating in school related issues, student concerns, and activities. Moreover, one third of the governing board is made up of parents who play a significant role in governing and making policy.
Interview Questions Relative to Research Question and School Goals Summary

For interview questions relating to school goals: (i) Enhance student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically, (ii) Enhance teacher enthusiasm about learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies into the classroom – interview transcripts disclosed that the participants in the study perceived that student and teacher engagement is very evident and considered the norm for best teaching practices for students at the charter school. During the course of this study, participants praised the charter school for the innovativeness and unique strategies employed to increase student engagement and learning. It was evident that teachers are given the opportunity and freedom to explore many creative ways to transform the teaching and learning process for students so that it is meaningful. The collective responses form parents, teachers, students, and community members reveal that learning includes students being engaged in learning centers with active participation for both the teachers and students. In addition, the use of technology and project based learning increases the engagement of students and teachers. Student and teacher involvement refers to the effective strategies to involve children and teachers in the teaching and learning process.

For interview questions relating to school goals: (iii) Encourage students to become more involved in their communities, now and as adults, by educating them about complex, real-world issues, (iv) Make students gain an appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another – a consistent recurrence was
“environment and recycling.” Participants referred to the Beta Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Environmental Club, and Technology Club as being instrumental in focusing on recycling and conservation initiatives. There has been an awareness of “going green” in the school due to the high presence of these clubs and organizations that purposefully get students, teachers, and parents involved in the process of protecting the environment. The students who are not members of the Beta Club provided much praise and affirmation for what the club does on the school campus and for the community, which signified a high presence and regard for this particular club. The other organizations such as, the basketball, track and field, Spanish Club, and cheerleading were all mentioned throughout the study. However, it was very clear that certain clubs and organizations were very popular and remained the most active for many participants selected for the interviews. Through the many observations, it is also evident that a large percentage of students participate in extracurricular activities in the school. These clubs have various functions and have been observed to raise funds and provide service for the community and local neighborhood. The formation of the clubs has started with parents volunteering to spearhead and sponsor the activities for the students who attend the charter school. All but one local club has a parent sponsor that is responsible for the start up of the local club or organization, which contributes to the success of parental and student involvement at the charter school. School clubs refer to the various organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Technology Club, Environmental Club, Beta Club, Student Government Association, Track and Field, and Band.

For interview questions relating to school goals: (vi) Teach students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions – further taped
interview sessions revealed that participants had a strong awareness of conservation and recycling, protecting and taking care of the environment in the community where the students and charter school reside. The community in which the charter school is located is abundant with natural resources and places a strong emphasis on recycling and conservation. It was the idea of the charter founders and its constituencies that there should be a heavy concentration on teaching students the importance of an environmental curriculum to increase advocacy for the preservation of the historical community. The school has a curriculum and resources imbedded into daily instruction that allow for additional standards and objectives to help stakeholders of the charter school identify the environmental needs of the community. During observations of environmental lessons and activities, students, parents, and teachers can be seen recycling throughout the school. There are recycling efforts that have extended to the home environment with students promoting what they have learned at school. There are recycling days where families can bring recycled items to the school. Students chart these items on class graphs, which indicate the levels of participation of students and their families. Conservation is also introduced into daily lessons with students learning alternatives to save water and electricity in the school and the community. The charter stakeholders are often involved in outreach into the community with cleaning nearby lakes and rivers and adopting nearby roads to rid the community of litter.

Recycling refers to the collective efforts of the school body of parents, students, and teachers participating in the school’s recycling program. As stated above, environment refers to the school’s independent curriculum of life, earth, and natural
science that has been integrated into the Georgia Performance Standards Curriculum. Moreover, the school has taken the initiative to use environmentally safe cleaning products and solutions, reinforcing the environmentally safe focus of the school’s charter.

Interview questions that relate to the following goal: (v) Enhance student understanding of the real-world consequences of political decisions, thereby, increasing their interest and participation in the political process – included shared governance involvement from parents, teachers, and students. Stakeholders also revealed that shared governance at the charter school is evident in its governance structure, PTO participation, volunteerism, student clubs and organizations, resources, school capital campaigns, organization and management structures. The charter school was founded on the premise that shared governance would be vital in the complete makeup of the charter school, focusing on personnel and parental involvement.

Teachers are participants in leadership teams to recommend prospective employees and a part of the interview process is for individuals who want to seek employment at the charter school. In addition, faculty and staff are responsible for researching and selecting the curriculum for the school. The choices in staff development also ensure that the faculty and staff have active voices in the instructional process of teacher development. In terms of students’ leadership and development, teachers have the opportunity to initiate, sponsor, and encourage clubs and activities that they have a keen interest in developing. There are many clubs and organizations that are teacher sponsored, which reflect a high level of teacher involvement and influence.
Parents play an important role in the governance structure of the school. Of the 6 member governance board, there are 4 parents who are elected to serve on the school board to make and enforce school policy and rules for the charter school. These parents are active in making decisions that affect finances and the overall structure of the charter school, especially the accountability of the charter petition. Parents, as Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) members of the school, are active in the business of raising funds for the school and providing additional resources. The PTO main function is to provide much needed financial resources to supplement expenditures not allotted for and supported by the local school district. The PTO has been instrumental in raising more than $20,000 to secure resources such as Interactive Technology Smart Boards and projectors for all of the classrooms. To support the limited faculty and staff that is on hand during day-to-day operations, many parents are involved in volunteering in the classrooms assisting teachers with projects and preparing classrooms. Parents are also engaged in serving as substitutes throughout the year.

As students matriculate through the school, the voices are also heard in developing the school and their needs. The Student Government Association (SGA) and class representatives are all included in making decisions about clubs, activities, and resources that are deemed appropriate. Students meet on a weekly and monthly basis to discuss several issues regarding celebratory events, field trips, and vending machines that all seem to be critical topics for the student body.

There were additional questions posed during the interview with participants that contributed to the analysis of the satisfaction of the charter goals. Questions 2 and 4 relate
to Goals 1 and 2: Students performing better academically due to enthusiasm and Teacher providing more instructional strategies to enhance learning.

Question 2. Are students performing differently at these schools when compared to other schools?

Question 4. Are there different ways to help students understand the work?

A composite of responses from the participants—teachers, parents, students, community members, and the administrator—all support that the students are performing better academically because the teaching is making the learning relevant to the students. Students are provided an array of ways to develop and understand the content and share the learning process with cooperative grouping. A few parents state that their child is doing better socially due to the fostering of relationships that is a focus for the school. Parents also highlight that their child is more articulate and able to express themselves in the charter environment. Teachers are meeting the goals for the child’s individual needs and take time out of their work to help. Students also highlighted that they are learning more technology at this school, as well as what is happening to the environment, and continually report that the school is “fun”. In a response from community members, they stated that by observing the growth that has occurred in the past year, they can testify that the students and parents love what the school is doing. Kids appear to be very happy and respectful.
Interview Questions and Responses

Student-Teacher Engagement and Teacher Creativity

During interviews with participants, the following questions were asked to the interviewee regarding student and teacher engagement.

Question 1:

Parent: How is the learning engaging and interesting at the charter school for your child?

Teacher: How do you make the learning engaging and interesting at the charter school?

Student: How is the learning engaging and interesting at the charter school?

Administrator: How do the teachers make learning engaging and interesting at the charter school?

Community: Do you think that the charter school makes learning engaging and interesting for students?

Question 2:

Parent: Do the teachers make the learning fun for your child and how?

Teacher: Do you make the learning fun and how?

Student: Do the teachers make learning fun and how?

Administrator: Do the teachers make the learning fun and how?

Community: Do the teachers make the learning fun for students at the charter school?

The interviewees’ answering comments to the above are summarized as follows:
Teachers:

There is a backwards design implemented with the teaching and learning which allows for a hook to get students involved and engaged. The developmental ages of the students are considered, with games and real world concepts integrated. Students are able to be involved in role play and are actively able to move around the room and in hallways to enhance the learning that is taking place. The curriculum is integrated among all subject levels making it more sensible and connected for students. Students are involved in the Socratic process, being able to have meaningful discussion about topics in the lessons. Blooms Taxonomy is often applied to challenge and invoke more responses and conversations from students. There are projects based learning activities so that students can apply learning skills with hands on activities. Differentiation is executed to help students become more involved in mastering objectives and standards, making learning easier, therefore, allowing for better engagement between teachers and students and among students. Attending workshops to improve learning resources and provide better learning activities have contributed to making learning fun and engaging. Student centers and relative life experiences connected to lessons have been very successful in engaging students.

Parents:

Learning is fun and teachers do not provide boring work. Teachers assist with work and there are a lot of games to play while learning. There are many hands on activities that take place in the classroom with the different strategies and ways to
assist students with learning. Teachers often go into character to get students motivated and excited in the reading process to better facilitate learning. I am impressed with the help that is given to students, specifically with tutoring assisting. There are a lot of interactions in the classroom using the Smart Board Interactive (Interactive Technology White Boards). Teachers provide weekend assistance to students who need additional support. Manipulatives play a major role in maintaining students' interest level and understanding of objectives and concepts. I give teachers credit for allowing students to learn at their own level and be creative because they respect creativity and innovativeness.

Students:
Learning is fun and there are many activities geared to help us learn the material. There are games in class and tutoring that helps individuals. There are group activities and the teachers continue to go over the work a lot. In math, we have baseball math that helps me learn the math facts. We are able to learn different things with projects, tests, and website concepts.

Administrator:
Direct instruction or scripted instruction seems not to be effective for most students, according to my research. Students must learn through hands on activities that stimulate their learning. The teachers focus on differentiation of learning by focusing on the variety of learning styles for students. There is engagement in the classroom with teachers being knowledgeable of the constructivist approach, allowing learning to
be facilitated better. I do workshops with teachers and show them. I am not just talking with them, I show them just how it works. I enjoy activities with them; their students enjoy activities with them as well, and this makes the whole process more engaging.

Community Members:
The students who attend the local church say that the students like the work because of the projects that they are able to do, and they like not having so many tests. The students love the science and environmental projects. The work seems to be more interesting and fun for the students. We have been instrumental in projects because we have donated supplies and materials to assist with students having more resources and materials.

Development and Promotion of Civic Participation

During interviews with participants, the following questions were asked to the interviewees regarding school clubs:

Question 5

Parent: *Does the school have clubs that are involved in the community and what are they?*

Teachers: *Do you encourage students to participate in clubs and activities that promote advocacy?*
Students. Does the school have clubs that are involved in the community and what are they?

Administrator: How do you encourage teachers to encourage students to participate in clubs and activities that promote advocacy for the environment and the community?

Community: Does the school have clubs and organizations that foster community and environmental advocacy?

The interviewees' answering comments to the above are summarized as follows:

Teachers:

One of the pillars of the schools is the clubs and organizations that allow children to be involved. I help students become more engaged in the clubs and activities that teach morals. Students are involved in the environmental clubs that help with recycling and conservation. There is a mentoring club at the school that helps children. There are large portion of students involved in Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts Clubs.

Parents:

The Beta Club is very important in the community with hosting a fish fry, and cleaning rivers and lakes. The Beta Club also helps feed the hungry and is involved in outreach programs in the community. The music club, also, is very active in the school. My child is too young to participate in any of the clubs and
organizations. The technology club is very active and there is recycling that they are involved in at the school. The track team is also a club that is popular on the school campus.

Students:
The Spanish Club is a club at the school. The school has clubs to help students to recycle bottles, cans, cell phones. The clubs encourage us tell the entire community to recycle. The Beta Club basically serves others in cleaning up lakes, leaves, and adopting rivers.

Administrator:
We have many teachers involved who get the teachers involved in the recycling process and cleaning up the lake. We have a mentoring program; we talk about going out to clean up so they can understand the value of respecting the environment. The school has many activities that promote leadership and skills to contribute to the development of character and building bonds and relationships. The students love the school and do not want to leave because of the many clubs and organizations that the students are involved in at school.

Community Members:
The clubs help keep the community clean, especially the Beta Club and the Technology Club. They are responsible for embracing the community’s values and focus on taking care of our neighborhood. The clubs keep the students active and involved in school.
Teaching Values that Relate to Recycling, Conservation, and Environment

The following questions were asked as they related to the implementation of environment, conservation, and recycling:

Question 6

Parent: How does the school help to plan to take care of your neighborhood?

Teacher: How do you help to plan ways for students to take care of their neighborhood?

Student: How does the school help to plan ways to take care of your neighborhood?

Community: What does the school do to help the community?

Question 7

Parent: Does the school teach your child the importance of your environment in your community and how?

Teacher: Do you teach your students about being involved in keeping the community clean and environmentally safe and how?

Students: Does the school teach you the importance of your environment in your community and how?

Administrator: How do you support the school in teaching the importance of the environment in the community?
Question 8

Parent: How is the school involved in keeping your community clean and environmentally safe?

Teacher: How do you teach your students about being involved in keeping the community clean and environmentally safe?

Student: How is the school keeping your community clean and environmentally safe?

Administrator: How do you support the school in keeping the community clean and environmentally safe?

The interviewees' answering comments to the above are summarized as follows:

Parents:

The school is an environmental school that focuses on protecting the environment. The school protects the environment by protecting the resources around the school and community. The school encourages students to be proactive. The school focuses on keeping the environment clean and safe and teaches you what not to do, such as not littering. The charter school teaches recycling and conservation of water and the ecosystem. The teachers also study the world and ways to keep the world safe and clean, by promoting carpooling at the school. The Beta Club is instrumental in keeping the South Lake River Bend. I live in Decatur and not Lithonia, but my daughter is still taught about keeping her neighborhood clean. We pick up trash and litter in our community.
Teachers:

I teach taking care of the environment in my classroom with recycling and water usage. Our class continues to focus on the value projects of recycling and campaigns to have a bid sanctuary. We have bird feeders throughout the school and we provide seeds during the year. Water and light conservation is a focus for my class and I do as much as possible to set the stage for my students to become leaders in their environment. I set the example and let them see me recycle. I encourage students and help other students and become leaders. I support, encourage, and empower students to become environmental activists.

Students:

We have a cleaning program on Saturdays and a watch out. Teachers teach us not to throw trash on the floor. We have community clean ups to keep the environment clean. At school, we recycle everyday. The school is involved in keeping the community clean and we do it because they ask the children.

Administrators:

I do my part just through learning and continued conversation, letting them observe me doing what I ask them to do and be proactive in the environment. I encourage and reinforce teachers who are committed to the environment and it is carried out at peer level instead of a top down approach. We have been recycling
in the hallways. I support and encourage teachers so they feel empowered to promote the efforts of recycling.

Community:
I see the efforts of the students with the property around the school and the church. There is less litter and the lake is kept in good shape with the community now being more aware because they see the students and families picking up trash. We have even started doing this at the church. I have bought a recycling bin for my local neighborhood. It is making us more proud to have the school in the community because of the school’s focus.

Development of Political Decision Making

The following questions were aimed to reveal the significance the stakeholders have in the decision making process at the charter school:

Question 9

Parent: What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?
Teacher: What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?
Student: What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?
Administrator: What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?
Community: What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?

Question 10:

Parent: Do you participate in any Parent Teacher Organizations or any other organizations?
Teacher: *What decisions are you involved in at the school? Is there any shared governance at this school? If so, what have you been involved in?*

Student: *Do you participate in the Student Government Association and class decisions?*

Administrator: *What decisions are you involved in at the school? Is there any shared governance and if so, what type are you involved in?*

The interviewees’ answering comments to the above are summarized as follows:

**Parents:**

Parents serve as PTO Presidents and board members. We also help with the charter renewal process and with finances. Parents were responsible for lobbying to add the 8th grade to the charter school. I am involved in the PTO and in raising money for the school. I participate in different after school activities. I volunteer in the PTO, Boy Scouts, band, as a teacher, and I read to children. I serve as a class representative and help with the needs of the class. I am active in the Washington Mutual Banking program for students. One of the requirements is to participate. I serve on various clubs and am very active.

**Teachers:**

I am a part of the leadership team and I help the chair in retaining teachers while also serving as the director of the after school program. We have the autonomy to make decisions in learning based on the theory of constructivism. I am involved
in all kinds of decisions, behavior and expectations, and am proactive in instruction. There is a lot of support. I am the liaison for the Girl Scouts, the cheerleading coach, and I assist with peer mentoring. I am involved in making decisions involving clean up that will benefit the school. We make decisions within the clubs. I am not involved in any major decisions of the school. There is a leadership team and I am involved in activities and support the school.

Students:

We help people to recycle. I make decisions on voting for things like President, candidates, SGA, and making decisions for parties. We participate in the school by learning how to improve it through voting, too. We help each other stay straight. We help to make a difference. We help by not judging people.

Administrators:

I make all kind of decisions, such as working with younger children, helping children learn behavior expectations of the school, working and helping teachers to be proactive in instruction and not to just say these kids can’t learn, but finding ways to make them learn. I am involved in all levels. I am a member of the leadership team and organize activities, I can’t list them all. I am a part of the shared governance, I question when something needs to be questions and I am another set of eyes for the administrator and support what needs to be supported.
Community:

I am a part of the board of directors for the church that leases the building to the school. We make decisions together for what is best for the school and the community. We are involved in adopting the classes. Each auxiliary supports a class and provides resources. We make decisions on rent, land usage and facilities in combination with the school.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to disclose the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations derived from this case study. This chapter will focus on the researcher’s learned knowledge as it relates to the perception of charter school stakeholders, namely, parents, teachers, students, and community members. The process that was engaged in during this case study is reflective in nature, being that the research was conducted at the researcher’s school. Therefore, it was site based and managed, and practitioner researched. This research was done in collaboration with participants who all have a vested interest in the school and whose perceptions as gathered in the data had a direct implementation on the satisfaction of the charter school’s goals.

Findings

Research Question 1: What is the satisfaction of charter school as perceived by students who attend the charter school examined in this study?

- The students felt that the learning was engaging and fun at the charter school
- All students interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the fact that teachers make the learning interesting.
• The students referred to the learning as connected to the focus of the school, technology, and the environment.
• As a result of attending the charter school, students feel that they are learning more at this school versus previous schools attended.
• The integration of curriculum and technology provides encouragement for the students as they learn.
• The charter school provides opportunity for the students to be involved in their community.
• The clubs and organizations are popular for students, especially the organizations that focus on the environment.
• The Beta Club, Technology Club, and the Environmental Club were recognized as being instrumental in giving back to the community and advocating for protection of the environment.
• The students gave credit to teachers providing additional support to help them, such as tutoring and differentiating lessons.
• Students were knowledgeable and active in recycling and conservation projects at the school.
• Students have expressed that they are active and involved in recycling and conservation in their neighborhood.
• Students believe that they have a voice in the school and are able to make decisions.
There is a Student Government Association and class representatives that support and represent students.

Research Question 2: What is the satisfaction of the charter school as perceived by parents who have children who attend the charter school?

- Parents express that the charter school is more creative and teachers employ games geared towards student learning.
- Parents give the faculty and staff credit for the unique ways they get students to learn the objectives and standards of the curriculum.
- Environmental issues and conservation that are being taught at the charter school were important factors for getting them involved in their communities.
- The clubs and organizations provide children with opportunities to be involved in the school.
- Parents play an active role in the various organizations of the school.
- Parents want and like the levels of participation that are available.
- Parents also agree that their child is performing better at the charter school than at previous schools, especially with respect to socialization.
Research Question 3: *What is the satisfaction of the charter school as perceived by the teachers who work at the charter school?*

- Teachers have autonomy to be creative with lessons.
- Teachers provide many resources and strategies to help students master content.
- Teachers differentiate work for students and provide additional support for students who have difficulty learning, with tutoring during the week and on Saturdays.
- Teachers use the best practices of Bloom's Taxonomy and learning styles to promote interest in the teaching and learning process.
- The environment curriculum is often integrated and useful in getting students involved in their community.
- The clubs and organizations are often sponsored by the teachers.
- Conservation and recycling are also very important goals for teachers at the charter school.
- Teachers are involved in shared governance, participating in hiring of teachers, curriculum, and operations. What is the satisfaction of charter school perceived by students who attend the charter school examined in this study?

Research Question 4: *What is the satisfaction of the charter school as perceived by community members where the charter school is located?*
• Community members state that the students seem to be happy and love being at the school.

• The community members have not seen instruction, but observe the type of resources that are available (Smart Boards) and praise the school for its innovativeness.

• Recycling and Conservation have created partnerships between the school and church.

• The church where the school is located plays a major role in building decisions as they have partnered with the school to form a Facilities Governance Board.

Research Question 5: How consistent is the satisfaction of the overall charter school as perceived by teachers, parents, and students, and community members viewed collectively?

• The stakeholders agree that learning for students is engaging and interesting.

• Having fun while learning is consistent with stakeholders’ perceptions of the charter school.

• Making a difference in the community and being involved are priorities at the charter school according to all stakeholders.

• Supporting the theme of the school, recycling, conservation, and technology seem to be appreciated by all stakeholders when it comes to helping students understand real world consequences.
• The clubs and organizations that are available at the school are worthy and beneficial resources for the students, parents, faculty and staff, and community members.

• Stakeholders are heavily involved in the decision making process that affects the school and local community.

Charter School Implications

Due to the successful implementation of the charter school goals, the school staff, parents, teachers, and community members all performed satisfactorily in defining their meaning of what they have experienced at the charter school. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), these perspectives are derived from the informant’s experiences and are useful in exploring the implications for schooling. The goals of the school obtained have indicated evidence that stakeholders are satisfied with the charter school’s program. Such an approval and acceptance of the charter goals have created buy-in from most students, teachers, and parents. The buy-in of the charter school goals has positively permeated the culture of the school and promoted a nurturing and viable community of learners that experience high levels of achievement.

Recommendations for Practice, Policy, and Research

To enhance, improve, and extend from the knowledge learned though this case study, the following recommendations are made: To enhance research, a similar qualitative study within another charter school that is rural or urban
can be researched to compare and contrast goals and satisfaction of stakeholders. A qualitative study can also be conducted by tracking students who have graduated from the charter school to see if they and their parents are satisfied with goals of current school attending. A quantitative study of a group of charter schools can be conducted to compare and contrast feelings, perceptions, and experiences of the participating stakeholders. A qualitative study on other types of schools, (public, private, theme, religious) can be conducted to discover whether or not stakeholders are experiencing similar levels of satisfaction with their school goals.

Policy implementation to ensure that such schools can develop other means of measuring performance using perception instruments (surveys, interviews, and rating scales) would enhance and make school data more meaningful. Recommendation of policy for charter schools/traditional school yearly collaboration should be implemented. This collaboration would focus on successful strategies/goals of that are effective to improving teacher development and growth, which can yield better student achievement and satisfaction. School policy recommendations should also include mandatory yearly evaluations of stakeholders satisfaction, including instruments to measure engagement, political participation or shared governance, and civic and value participation of a charter schools as well as traditional schools

Recommendation for practice should include, but not limited to all schools implementing succinct and obtainable goals developed by stakeholders, making continuous and ongoing recommendations to enhance and
revise goals based on charter renewal or school accreditation. In addition, school stakeholders should meet frequently to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of the school goals and its effect on each entity of stakeholder. It is also important to ensure that professional development activities and staff members maintain a consistent focus on the goals and ways to improve education, updating and communicating goals that must be provided in every forum so as to reinforce charter expectations and purpose for the school.

Summary

As a result of the implementation of the charter school, its specialization of the school’s focus, the goal of student success is guaranteed to be measured by the overall success of the students’ ability to master higher-order thinking skills, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making, motivation to learn with a continuum of knowledge, recognition of conflict and need to reconcile competing societal interest. In addition, there will be high gains in parental and community participation in the educational processes. Moreover, the achieved goals will result in more student self-control and responsibility, higher grades and test scores, active student participation in classroom and school community, students’ ability to think on their feet and express themselves verbally and in writing, and teacher commitment to curriculum. In conclusion, with respect to the level of “satisfaction with charter schools”, specifically
these charter goals, educational entities must unite to change the system of education to effect change that must be implemented. To avoid the pitfall of education and the lack of support for public education, which exist for many public schools, this charter school model can be global and become an "icon" model that will sustain all levels of schooling (Anyon, 1997).
Appendix A

Clark Atlanta University

Department of Educational Leadership

A Case Study of an African American Charter School Satisfactory Performance Based on the Perception of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Students, and the Community.

Dear Dekalb Academy of Technology and Environment Board of Directors:

The purpose of this letter is to seek permission to have your school participate in a research study, "A Case Study of an African American Charter School Satisfactory Performance Based on the Perception of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Students, and the Community". This case study is part of doctoral dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta Georgia. This study is being conducted to examine how students, teachers, parents, and community members view their charter school as being satisfactory. The population involved will include students enrolled in first through seventh grades, certified classrooms teachers, and a collective group of parents and community members associated with the charter school in Georgia. Participants will be interviewed and asked to participate in focus groups or interviews. The information collected in this study is confidential and names will not be used. Results will be reported by overall numbers and generic student letters in order to guarantee absolute confidentiality. Thank you for giving permission to complete this study on your campus.

Maury Wills, Doctoral Student
Department of Educational Leadership
Clark Atlanta University

Dr. Trevor Turner, Advisor
Department of Educational Leadership
Clark Atlanta University

I have read the above statements and agree to have my school participate in this research study regarding the perceptions of the charter school based on satisfaction of stakeholders.

Board of Directors President’s Signature

Date
Appendix B

Clark Atlanta University
Department of Educational Leadership

Parent/Community Informed Consent
A Case Study of an African American Charter School Satisfactory Performance Based on the Perception of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Students, and the Community.

I am being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Maury Wills, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University as part of his dissertation. The title is, “A Case Study of an African American Charter School Satisfactory Performance Based on the Perception of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Students, and the Community”. My participation will involve the completion of a focus group or interview. I will be one among many other parents/community members asked to participate.

- I understand there are no risks involved
- I understand my participation is voluntary
- I understand I will be asked to participate in a focus group/ interview
- I understand that non-participation will not have an impact on my child’s performances and there will be no consequences for not participating
- I understand that I will not be compensated for participation
- I understand that there will not be any form of identification of me during the interview/focus groups

Dr. Trevor Turner, a professor in the Educational Leadership Department at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia is supervising this study. I may contact Dr. Turner at 404-880-8980 or Maury Wills at 404-200-8627 to answer any questions about my participation. The responses will be confidential and no names will be used. Results will be reported by overall numbers and guaranteed absolute confidential. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Subject Date

Signature of Principal Investigator
Doctoral Student
Department of Educational Leadership
Clark Atlanta University
Appendix C

Clark Atlanta University

Department of Educational Leadership

Teacher Informed Consent
A Case Study of an African American Charter School Satisfactory Performance Based on the Perception of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Students, and the Community.

I am being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Maury Wills, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University as part of his dissertation. The title is, “A Case Study of the Perceptions of An African American Middle Class Charter School Based on the Perceptions of Teachers, Students, and the Community.” This case study is part of doctoral dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. My participation will involve being invited to a focus group or interview. I will be 1 of 4 teachers asked to participate.

- I understand there are no risks involved
- I understand my participation is voluntary
- I understand I will be asked to participate in a 20 minute focus group/interview
- I understand that non-participation will have an impact on my job performances and there will be no consequences for not participating
- I understand that I will not be compensational for participation
- I understand that there will not be any form of identification of me as a result of participating

Dr. Trevor Turner, a professor in the Educational Leadership Department at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia is supervising this study. I may contact Dr. Turner at 404-880-8000 or Maury Wills at 404-200-8627 to answer any questions about my participation. The responses will be confidential and no names will be used. Results will be reported by overall numbers and each students will be assigned a letter to guarantee absolute confidential.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Subject</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Signature of Principal Investigator
Doctoral Student
Department of Educational Leadership
Clark Atlanta University
Appendix D

Clark Atlanta University
Department of Educational Leadership

Student Informed Consent

A Case Study of an African American Charter School Satisfactory Performance Based on the Perception of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Students, and the Community.

I am being asked to provide consent for my child to participate in a research study conducted by Maury Wills, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership at Clark Atlanta University as part of his dissertation, “A Case Study of an African American Charter School Satisfactory Performance Based on the Perception of Stakeholders: Parents, Teachers, Students, and the Community.” My child will be one of many in grades first through third to be interviewed and a part of a focus group or interview regarding his/her perception of school.

- I understand there are no risks involved for my child
- I understand my participation is voluntary for my child
- I understand that non-participation will not have an impact on my child’s performance and there will be no consequences for participating in the focus group or interview
- I understand that my child will not be compensated for participation
- I understand that there will not be any form of identification of my child in the focus groups

Dr. Trevor Turner, a professor in the Educational Leadership Department at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia is supervising this study. I may contact Dr. Turner at 404-880-8000 or Maury Wills at 404-200-8627 to answer any questions about my participation. The responses will be confidential and no names will be used. Results will be reported by overall numbers and each student will be guaranteed absolute confidentiality. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and voluntarily agree to have my child participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Parent of Child  Child’s Name  Date

________________________  __________________________  ________________
Signature of Principal Investigator  Doctoral Student  Department of Educational Leadership  Clark Atlanta University
Appendix E

Interview Questions

Student Interview Questions

Charter Goal 1: Enhance student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically.

Questions

1. How is the learning engaging and interesting at the charter school?
2. Do you think you are performing better at this school? Why?

Charter Goal 2: Enhance teacher enthusiasm about learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies to the classroom.

Questions

3. Do the teachers make learning fun and how?
4. Do teachers find different ways to help you understand the work?

Charter Goal 3: Encourage students to become more involved in their communities.

Charter Goal 4: Make students gain appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another.
Charter Goal 6: Teach students to act responsibility and consider environmental implications of business decisions.

Questions

1. How does the school help you to plan ways to take care of your neighborhood?
2. Does the school have clubs that are involved in the community and what are they?
3. Does the school teach you the importance of caring for the environment in your community?
4. Is the school involved in keeping your community clean and environmentally safe?

Charter Goal 5: Enhance students' understanding of the real world consequences of political decisions, increasing interest in participation in the political process.

Questions

9. What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?
10. Do you participate in the Student Government Association and class decisions?

Parent Interview Questions
Charter Goal 1: Enhance student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically.

Questions

1. How is the learning engaging and interesting at the charter school for your child?

2. Do you think your child is performing better at this school? Why?

Charter Goal 2: Enhance teacher enthusiasm with respect to learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies to the classroom.

Questions

3. Do the teachers make learning fun for your child and how?

4. Do teachers find different ways to help your child understand the work and how?

Charter Goal 3: Encourage students to become more involved in their communities.

Charter Goal 4: Make students gain appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another.

Charter Goal 6: Teach students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions.

Questions
5. How does the school help to plan ways to take care of your neighborhood?

6. Does the school have clubs that give your children an opportunity to become involved in the community? What are they?

7. Does the school teach your child of the importance of caring for the environment in your community?

8. Is the school involved in keeping your community clean and environmentally safe?

Charter Goal 5: Enhance students’ understanding of the real world consequences of political decisions, increasing interest in participation in the political process.

Questions

9. What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?

10. Do you participate or volunteer in any Parent-Teacher or other organizations?

Teacher Interview Questions

Charter Goal 1: Enhance student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically.

Questions

1. How do you make the learning engaging and interesting at the charter school?
2. Do you think your students are performing differently at this school compared to another? Why?

Charter Goal 2: Enhance teacher enthusiasm with respect to learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies to the classroom.

Questions

3. Do you make learning fun and how?

4. Do you find different ways to help you understand the work and how?

Charter Goal 3: Encourage students to become more involved in their communities.

Charter Goal 4: Make students gain appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another.

Charter Goal 6: Teach students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions.

Questions

5. How do you help to plan ways for students to take care of their neighborhood?

6. Do you encourage students to participate in clubs/activities that promote advocacy for the environment/community?

7. Do you teach your students the importance of their environment in their community? How?
8. Do you teach your students about being involved in keeping the community clean and environmentally safe? How?

Charter Goal 5: Enhance students’ understanding of the real world consequences of political decisions, increasing interest in participation in the political process.

Questions

9. What kind of decisions do you help to make in your school?

10. What decisions are you involved in at the school? Is there any shared governance at this school? If so, what type have you been involved in?

Community Interview Questions

Charter Goal 1: Enhance student enthusiasm about learning so as to perform better academically.

Questions

1. How is the learning engaging and interesting at the charter school for your community?

2. Do you think students are performing better at this school than others in the community? Why?
Charter Goal 2: Enhance teacher enthusiasm with respect to learning and teaching so as to bring more innovative instructional strategies to the classroom.

Questions

3. Do the teachers make learning fun for your students and how?

4. Do teachers find different ways to help children understand the work and how?

Charter Goal 3: Encourage students to become more involved in their communities.

Charter Goal 4: Do teachers teach students to gain an appreciation for how their community and natural surroundings relate to one another.

Charter Goal 6: Teach students to act responsibly and consider environmental implications of business decisions.

Questions

5. How does the school help to plan ways to take care of your community?

6. Does the school have clubs that give children an opportunity to become involved in the community and what are they?

7. Does the school teach children of the importance of caring for the environment in your community? How do you know this?
8. Is the school involved in keeping your community clean and environmentally safe?

Charter Goal 5: Enhance students’ understanding of the real world consequences of political decisions, increasing interest in participation in the political process.

Questions

9. As a part of the community, what kind of decisions do you help to make in the school?

10. Do you participate or volunteer in any other organizations?
Appendix F
Dekalb GCRCT Test Results

Scale: % meeting or exceeding standards

Grade 1

Reading

97% (2007)  
100% (2006)  
Data not available for this school (2005)  
Data not available for this school (2004)  
The state average for Reading was 90% in 2007.

English Language Arts

94% (2007)  
93% (2006)  
Data not available for this school (2005)  
Data not available for this school (2004)  
The state average for English Language Arts was 83% in 2007.

Math

79% (2007)  
100% (2006)  
Data not available for this school (2005)  
Data not available for this school (2004)  
The state average for Math was 83% in 2007.

Grade 2

Reading

88% (2007)  
86% (2006)  
Data not available for this school (2005)  
Data not available for this school (2004)  
The state average for Reading was 91% in 2007.

English Language Arts

68% (2007)

82% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

Data not available for this school (2004)

The state average for English Language Arts was 84% in 2007.

Math

74% (2007)

86% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

Data not available for this school (2004)

The state average for Math was 81% in 2007.


Grade 3

Reading

74% (2007)

59% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

Data not available for this school (2004)

The state average for Reading was 85% in 2007.

Social Studies

78% (2007)

The state average for Social Studies was 88% in 2007.

Science

55% (2007)

68% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

The state average for Science was 70% in 2007.
English Language Arts

91% (2007)
62% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for English Language Arts was 86% in 2007.

Math

74% (2007)
77% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for Math was 91% in 2007.


Grade 4

Reading

88% (2007)
68% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for Reading was 85% in 2007.

Social Studies

94% (2007)
The state average for Social Studies was 89% in 2007.

Science

88% (2007)
91% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
The state average for Science was 72% in 2007.

English Language Arts

75% (2007)
73% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for English Language Arts was 84% in 2007.

Math
- 75% (2007)
- 78% (2006)
- Data not available for this school (2005)
- Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for Math was 78% in 2007.

0%  50%  100%

Grade 5

Reading
- 90% (2007)
- 90% (2006)
- Data not available for this school (2005)
- Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for Reading was 86% in 2007.

Social Studies
- 90% (2007)
The state average for Social Studies was 88% in 2007.

Science
- 55% (2007)
- 85% (2006)
- Data not available for this school (2005)
The state average for Science was 66% in 2007.

English Language Arts
- 95% (2007)
- 95% (2006)
- Data not available for this school (2005)
- Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for English Language Arts was 88% in 2007.

Math
- 70% (2007)
- 100% (2006)
- Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for Math was 88% in 2007.

Grade 6

Reading

96% (2007)

100% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

Data not available for this school (2004)

The state average for Reading was 89% in 2007.

Social Studies

97% (2007)

The state average for Social Studies was 83% in 2007.

Science

38% (2007)

43% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

The state average for Science was 60% in 2007.

English Language Arts

89% (2007)

96% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

Data not available for this school (2004)

The state average for English Language Arts was 87% in 2007.

Math

89% (2007)

39% (2006)

Data not available for this school (2005)

Data not available for this school (2004)

The state average for Math was 65% in 2007.

Grade 7

Reading
- 78% (2007)
- 100% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for Reading was 85% in 2007.

Social Studies
- 71% (2007)
The state average for Social Studies was 86% in 2007.

Science
- 28% (2007)
- 62% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
The state average for Science was 71% in 2007.

English Language Arts
- 85% (2007)
- 94% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for English Language Arts was 90% in 2007.

Math
- 43% (2007)
- 75% (2006)
Data not available for this school (2005)
Data not available for this school (2004)
The state average for Math was 74% in 2007.


About the Tests

- In 2006-2007 Georgia administered the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in reading, English language arts and math
in grades 1 through 8 and in science and social studies in grades 3 through 8.

- The CRCT is a standards-based assessment, which means it measures how well students are mastering specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Georgia.
- The goal is for all students to score at or above the state standard.
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

### SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Has the school your expectations as a school?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Has the school met your expectations for your child's education?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Are you satisfied with the location of the school?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Does your child express satisfaction with the school?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Are you satisfied with the security of the school?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Are you satisfied with the extra curriculum activities?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

### TEACHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Are you satisfied with the accessibility of your child's teacher?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Are you satisfied with your teacher's knowledge of subject matter?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Did the teacher include higher order thinking skills?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Did the teacher include enough homework to your satisfaction?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Did the teacher keep you informed of your child's academic progress?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Do you feel teachers have a working relationship with parents?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

### PTO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Has the PTO met the expectations as an organization?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Did you like the PTO Fundraisers?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Do you agree the PTO is important for school?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Has the PTO offered any activities you could participate in?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Has the PTO offered any activities your children could participate in?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# HEADMASTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has the Headmaster met your expectations?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Has the Headmaster met the educational expectations for the Student Body?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you see a good working relationship between administration and faculty?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you see a good working relationship between the Headmaster and Board of Directors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Has the Headmaster been available to meet your concerns?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are you happy with the changes Headmaster has applied to DATE?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# BOARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are you satisfied with the Board of Director's Leadership of DATE?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are you satisfied with the changes the Board has applied to DATE?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are you in agreement with the vision of the Board of Directors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Has the Board been available to meet your concerns?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you agree that the Board of Directors has been successful this school year?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Can the Board of Directors do more for the parents?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following:

### Parental Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you think that you have met the parental involvement standards set forth in your Parent Contract?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My participation in DATE parental involvement opportunities allowed me to be connected to the school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My participation in school actives benefited my child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The mandatory monthly 20 hours parental involvement was adequate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that the school could offer more ways of obtaining the mandatory, monthly 20 hours participation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe the school should increase volunteer opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. (2006). *Georgia's charter schools continue to lead the way in achieving adequate yearly progress.*


